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Adventure

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Ashamed to Work for $30 a Week—
That's Why He Now Earns $10,000 a Year

I WAS a fizzle. Here I had been working hard for 10 years and what had I to show for it? A job at thirty dollars a week! And I realized that $30 a week at *my* job was my limit.

I was pretty much discouraged. Prices had gone up and it was getting harder and harder to run the house on my salary. It seemed nothing short of a crime for me to deprive my wife of the little conveniences and comforts which should be hers. I was actually *ashamed* to bring home my pay check!

But I shook myself free of the "blues." No use in being disgusted with myself. The thing to do was to face facts and reason my way out of the rut I was in.

The Secret of His Failure

That night I lay awake. I took a complete inventory of myself. At first I started digging up alibis. But in my heart I knew that there wasn't any. What then *was* the trouble?

I thought of the job. I did like it. I liked the fellows I worked with too. But I had to admit that it could never, from its very nature, pay me a big salary. Then why hadn't I changed?

A thought popped into my head—a disagreeable thought. I tried to submerge it, to forget it. But it persisted. I was forced to admit it. It was true. I *did* lack "sand"—I was actually *afraid* to get out of my rut. That was the whole solution.

About a week later I ran into Jim Larkin, an old side-kick I hadn't seen for years. Jim looked like a million dollars—just seemed to radiate success. I hated to tell him about myself, but finally opened up and told him everything. He listened without saying a word. When he did speak it was with the assurance of a man who knew what he was talking about.

Choosing a Big-Money Field

"The only real failure," he said, "is the man who knowing his job isn't big enough, sticks to it. You want to make big money. Then go where big money can be made. Get into Selling! Now don't tell me you can't sell. *Anyone* can learn to sell! Never mind about your lack of experience. *You get into selling!*"

He then told me about an organization of top-notch salesmen and sales managers formed for developing men like me into salesmen. He told me how this same organization had put him on his feet. That day I wrote to the National Salesmen's Training Association.

From $30 a Week to $10,000 a Year

While I had a great deal of confidence in what my training could do for me, I was absolutely unprepared for what actually happened when I started selling. It was then that I realized what the N. S. T. A. meant when they said they developed "Master Salesmen." At the end of the first month I received a letter from my Sales Manager congratulating me. I had made a record for my territory! Each month my sales kept increasing and raises followed one on the heels of another.

That is how I jumped from $30 a week to over $10,000 a year. And the funny part is I don't work half as hard as I used to. I travel all over, stop at the best hotels, meet every type of interesting business man, and am in touch with good business opportunities. I can't imagine myself liking any other work now.

I often wonder if it isn't all a dream. We own our own home, a car, have a tidy bank account, and enjoy all the luxuries which a $10,000 a year job can bring. I actually shudder when I think what would have happened if my "$30-per" had not shamed me into writing to the N. S. T. A.!

Get Into This $10,000 a Year Class

You can become a Master Salesman too. It doesn't matter what you are now doing. J. P. Overstreet of Denison, Texas, was formerly a policeman. Today his earnings are over $1,000 a month. C. W. Campbell of Greensburgh, Pa., was a railroad fireman,—last month his earnings were $1,560. Charles L. Berry was a farm hand; the first month he started to sell, he earned $1,000. Warren Hartle, formerly in the railway mail service, now earns $10,000 a year as a salesman. And these are but a few of thousands who have multiplied their former earnings by entering this big-money field by way of the National Salesmen's Training Association.

Send For Startling Free Proof

The same opportunity which took these men out of the small-pay class and landed them in the $10,000 a Year Class is open to you. You have only to write to the N. S. T. A. just as they did and you will receive without cost or obligation a wonderful book on salesmanship and free proof that you too can become a Master Salesman. You will read there the fascinating stories of men who thought they couldn't sell and who today are earning more money than they ever dreamed possible. The N. S. T. A. maintains a Free Employment Service to help its members to jobs in the lines for which they are best suited. This in itself is of incalculable value, for it allows the prospective salesman to make a complete survey of the selling field and to select the work which most appeals to him.

Just mail the coupon or write for this free illustrated book, "A Knight of the Grip." Let us prove to you that regardless of what you are doing now, you can quickly become a Star Salesman. Let us show you how you too can step into the ranks of these big money-makers of business. See how easily you can learn this fascinating, big-pay profession at home in your spare time. Mail the coupon at once. National Salesmen's Training Association, Dept. 73-C, Chicago, Ill.

National Salesmen's Training Association
Dept. 73-C, Chicago, Ill.

Please send me, without any obligation on my part, your free book, "A Knight of the Grip," and full information about the N. S. T. A. system of Salesmanship Training and Employment Service. Also a list showing lines of business with openings for salesmen.

Name .....

Street .....

City ..... State .....

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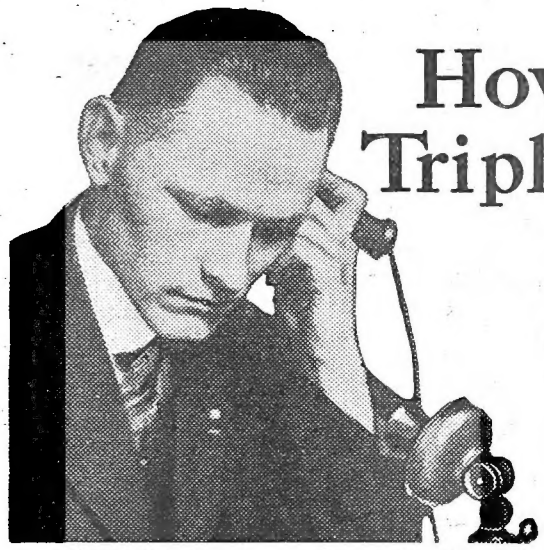

How Cubberley Tripled His Salary

BY EUGENE FITZGERALD

The true story of a country boy's rise to industrial engineer with E. I. du Pont de Nemours Company

TAKE out your map or atlas and turn to the State of Missouri. Start at Jefferson City and run your finger northwest past Brunswick, Chillicothe and Gallatin until you come to the small dot that stands for Pattonsburg.

You may hardly be able to find it, for Pattonsburg is a town of only 900 inhabitants. But this unobtrusive little town was the home of A. H. Cubberley, now industrial engineer with the E. I. du Pont de Nemours Company, of Wilmington, Delaware.

When Mr. Cubberley was fifteen years old he was employed as an assistant clerk in a small hardware store at a salary as small as the position.

Fortunately, Cubberley was not satisfied. He saw that there was no future in the work he was doing, and he decided to make a new start before it was too late.

But what should he do and how should he do it? That was the question. How was he to get the special training which he knew he needed so badly?

Sometimes he would stay awake for hours thinking about it—wondering about it—yes, worrying about it.

And then one day he found the answer!

He was reading over a magazine, just as you are doing today, when he came across an advertisement of the International Correspondence Schools. He had seen many such advertisements before and had passed them by.

But somehow this particular advertisement told of a man just like himself who had won advancement and more money through spare-time study.

The story was so real—so convincing—that Cubberley decided he could do as well. So that day he marked and mailed that familiar coupon.

It was the turn in the road for Cubberley. He studied in the spare time that he used to waste. Those practical, well-illustrated I. C. S. lessons fascinated him. They made everything so simple—so easy to learn.

And Cubberley felt himself growing—he found that concentration on his studies and a burning zeal to conquer new fields brought greater success than any other investment he had ever made.

Today, A. H. Cubberley, who was once an assistant clerk in a small country store, is an industrial engineer for the biggest company of its kind in the world—at a salary in keeping with the position.

"I attribute much of my success to the I. C. S.," he said to me the other day. "The training I got from those textbooks was the means of changing my entire life.

"And how easy it all was! I had just as much fun as the other fellows, but instead of wasting my spare time, I put it to work for me.

"Lots of fellows laughed at me and said I was just wasting my money. Many of them are still working at small jobs and small salaries.

"My advice to young men can be summed up in one word—*Study*. It is the only thing that will make you better than the other man. The I. C. S. advanced me from a mere worker to a trained man. It will do the same for every other man with ambition."

Employers are begging for men like Cubberley—men who really want to get ahead in the world and are willing to prove it by training themselves in spare time to do some one thing well.

Prove that you are that kind of a man! The International Correspondence Schools are ready and anxious to help you prepare for something better if you'll simply give them the chance. More than two million men and women in the last 30 years have taken the I. C. S. route to better jobs and more money.

Is there any reason why you should let others climb over you when you have the same chance they have? Surely, the least you can do is to find out just what there is in this proposition for you. Here is all we ask: Without cost, without obligating yourself in any way simply mark and mail this coupon and we will send you the full story of what the I. C. S. can do for you.

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☐ Telephone Work	☐ Railroad Positions
☐ MECHANICAL ENGINEER	☐ ILLUSTRATING
☐ Mechanical Draftsman	☐ Cartooning
☐ Machine Shop Practice	☐ Private Secretary
☐ Toolmaker	☐ Business Correspondent
☐ Gas Engine Operating	☐ BOOKKEEPER
☐ CIVIL ENGINEER	☐ Stenographer & Typist
☐ Surveying and Mapping	☐ Certified Public Accountant
☐ MINE FOREMAN or ENG'R	☐ TRAFFIC MANAGER
☐ STATIONARY ENGINEER	☐ Railway Accountant
☐ Marine Engineer	☐ Commercial Law
☐ ARCHITECT	☐ GOOD ENGLISH
☐ Contractor and Builder	☐ Common School Subjects
☐ Architectural Draftsman	☐ CIVIL SERVICE
☐ Concrete Builder	☐ Railway Mail Clerk
☐ Structural Engineer	☐ AUTOMOBILES
☐ PLUMBING & HEATING	☐ Mathematics
☐ Sheet Metal Worker	☐ Navigation
☐ Textile Overseer or Supt.	☐ AGRICULTURE
☐ CHEMIST	☐ Poultry Raising ☐ Spanish
☐ Pharmacy	☐ BANKING ☐ Teacher

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ADVENTURE
March 10th, 1922

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Volume 33
Number 4

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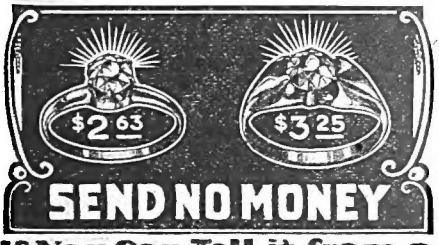

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ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN, Editor

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**Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.*

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"*JIMGRIM*" sets out across the desert from Jerusalem to subdue a rebellious Arab sheik—by diplomacy if possible, by force if necessary. "THE LION OF PETRA," a complete novel by Talbot Mundy, in the next issue.

Other stories in the next issue are forecast on the last page of this one.

Don't forget the dates of issue for *Adventure*—the 10th, 20th and 30th of each month

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Adventure
March 10th 1922
Vol. XXXIII
No. 4

Black Hawk

A COMPLETE NOVELETTE

By Arthur O. Friel

Author of "The Vulture," "The Jararaca," etc.

IN THE vast trackless solitudes of the Amazon jungle dwells the bird of evil omen—the black hawk.

Not the somber silent ghoul of the upper air which drops to rend and destroy after the hand of Death has struck—not the *urubu* vulture. Far more sinister is the black hawk, *caracara-i*. The vulture is but the follower of fate. The hawk is the harbinger of doom.

Out of the lethal labyrinths of tropical thicket the wide-winged portent floats to circle above some little Indian village, veering downward at length into the top of some tall tree. And there it whines.

Hour after hour its doleful plaint sounds, foreboding death to some inhabitant of the huts beneath; presaging, too, a sudden end to any weaker bird which, moved by the forlorn cry, flies near to seek the cause.

Not until it has made its kill or been attacked by a squad of the doughty little *bemtivi* flycatchers will it swerve again into the jungle fastness whence it came. And long after the black hawk has gone the copper-skinned men who have heard its querulous note bear in their hearts numb dread.

Yet, for all its menace, the *caracara-i* is only a bird, and of itself can do nothing to fulfil its warning to men. So, if the

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wanderer on the upper Amazon should by chance drift into the river-town of Viciado and speak there the name "Black Hawk," he might be surprized to see its hard-swearing, hard-drinking inhabitants, male and female both, glance nervously over their shoulders and hastily gulp another gourd of raw liquor. But in time he would learn that their qualms were due not so much to superstitious fear of a bird as to memory of another sort of Black Hawk.

He might hear, too—when the bacchanal bravos of the town had sufficiently fortified their courage—much braggadocio regarding their valiant deeds in connection with the passing of that Black Hawk. But these vaporings would be even less trustworthy than the tall talk born of drink usually is. They would be a mere mass of lies, told by men who had no hand in the removal of the worst menace their territory ever knew.

If the traveler would learn the facts, he might perhaps journey on westward to the river Javary, the flowing boundary between Brazil and Peru; and there he might seek out a straight-speaking, straight-shooting veteran of the Brazilian bush—one Lourenço Moraes. Then, if Lourenço liked the set of the stranger's jaw and the look in his eye, and if he happened to be at leisure and in reminiscent mood, the true tale would be told. And this is the tale:

I

OUR part in this affair of the Black Hawk began, *senhor*, in the office of my employer, Coronel Nunes, owner of the greatest rubber estate in this Javary jungle. It ended in the wilderness.

Four of us sat that hot afternoon in the room which the *coronel* uses for business. Three of us belonged there; the *coronel* and I and my comrade Pedro Andrada, who, like myself, drew pay as a *seringueiro* but much preferred to roam the bush as a scout. The fourth was a blond-bearded but deeply tanned North American who called himself "Thomas Gordon Mack of the U. S. A."

Though Thomas Gordon Mack—or, as Pedro and I called him, Senhor Tom—was a recent arrival at the headquarters of the *coronel*, he was no stranger to Brazil or to us two bushmen. He had been exploring the unmapped region to the southeast of us for the government authorities of Rio. This work had ended suddenly when a brutal tribe of cannibals killed all his assistants and carried him alive to their chief to be tortured.

Pedro and I, scouting for new rubber-trees, had found him in the hands of those beasts and managed not only to save him but also later to destroy his captors. And now he had returned with us to headquarters, where we two were to get a new outfit and report to the *coronel*.

For a time after finishing our tale we sat smoking. When the *coronel's* long cigar had shrunk to a stub he spoke, first to Senhor Tom and then to us.

"Senhor Mack, your explorations have ended, or at least must be suspended until you can requisition new aids. Now I shall be greatly pleased if you will consider this poor house your headquarters and command my services in any way. There is much work to be done, I dare say, in preparing your report to the government; and if the facilities here are not too crude I trust that you will remain here to do that work and to enjoy whatever sport the river and the forest afford.

"Lourenço and Pedro, I sent you out to find several million milreis' worth of new rubber, and you only got yourselves into a fine fight—as usual. If all my men were as unreliable as you two scamps I should soon be ruined. Now I am going to sentence you——"

He paused, his eyes twinkling.

"To go back and find that rubber," Pedro smiled.

"Exactly. Either to do that or to go on another journey and find something else. You have your choice."

We sat up. Knowing our old *coronel* as we did, we suspected that the other journey he had in mind was likely to be dangerous. Otherwise he would not have given us a choice. It is his practise never to order a man to go on a hazardous mission. He lets the man know what he wants, and if the man refuses to take the risk the *coronel* neither blames him then nor holds the refusal against him afterward.

Unforeseen danger may, of course, come to any of us *seringueiros* in our daily work—risks of attack by snakes or wild beasts or savages—and we are expected to be ready to meet such things. But when perils are known beforehand, or even suspected, Coronel Nunes will drive no man among them.

"If there is rubber in the bush beyond

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where we have just been, *coronel*, it will still be there whenever we return," I said. "Rubber-trees do not ramble off. Let us hear of the other thing in your mind."

"Have you heard of Caracara-i?" he asked.

We nodded.

"Certainly," I said. "The black hawk of death. Every bushman knows that bird."

"This is a bird of another feather," he told us, "though I suspect that it, too, is a hawk of death. A wingless hawk which lives on the ground, but which has sharp talons and a bloody beak.

"Word has come to me that in the jungle behind Viciado, on the Solimoes— By the way, do you men know that town?"

"I know where it is, and I know it has a bad name," I replied, "but I never have visited it. Have you, Pedro?"

My partner shook his head. Then up spoke Senhor Tom.

"I have. It looks worse than it sounds and it smells worse than it looks. Sets on a hill on the south shore of the Amazon, between the Javary and the Jutahy. Inhabited by Indians, half-breeds, and near-white bums. Men are a lot of booze-hounds, and the women—phew! As Kipling might have said, 'The female of the species is more rotten than the male.' Favorite indoor sport, as you might expect, is wife-beating. Some town!"

"A very good description of the place—though somewhat mild, if I may believe all I have heard of it," the *coronel* agreed. "I never have stopped there, nor do I wish to. As you say, it is on the south shore of the Solimoes—that is the name by which we Brazilians call the upper Amazon, *senhor*—and between this Javary of ours and the Jutahy. But it is not the town itself which interests me, but what lies behind it.

"I am told that there, miles back from the river, is a man called Black Hawk, or *Caracara-i;* that he is bad; and, more important, that he has ambitions to make himself a sort of jungle emperor. His idea, I understand, is to control the entire country between the Javary and the Jurua, the next river eastward from the Jutahy—a neat little empire of some seventy thousand square miles. Swamp-land, of course, covered with wild jungle, inhabited by aborigines; but capable of giving him a very respectable fortune in the shape of rubber, medicinal herbs, and such things.

"This would be well enough if he would let the rest of us live in peace—any man has the right to carve his fortune out of this jungle if he is man enough to do it. But that is not his plan. He boasts that every rubber owner, every trader, every man in this region who has any business or any money, must pay heavy tribute to him or die. That leaves us only two possibilities; to run or to fight."

Pedro and I laughed loudly.

"He is full of Viciado rum," Pedro scoffed. "I should like to see him come in here and try to scare you out, *coronel*. The poor fool!"

But the *coronel* did not laugh.

"It is not a joke, Pedro *meo*," he frowned. "I do not take seriously such a matter unless it is serious. This Black Hawk is not confining himself to drunken dreaming, nor is he acting single-handed. He has made a beginning by terrorizing Viciado, robbing and murdering traders, and stealing women; and he has a small army of Indians which is increasing steadily. Once his army is big enough he will be able to carry out his plan."

"But he couldn't last long," objected Senhor Tom. "The government——"

"Is thousands of miles from here, *senhor*," the *coronel* cut in. "And if this man presses all the Indians of this section into his service it will take even the government a long time to overthrow him. Jungle fighting is the hardest kind of fighting. And it does you no good to have the government execute a man for your murder. Better prevent him from committing the murder."

"True enough," nodded the blond man.

"What is more, *senhor*, we Brazilians have not forgotten the war of the Cabanos, though it took place nearly a hundred years ago—the revolt in which the blacks massacred the whites in the streets of Para. Para, as you know, is two thousand miles nearer to Rio than this place; yet it took the government nearly a year to suppress the rebellion, and it would have taken much longer if the Mundurucus and other Indians had not fought for the whites.

"Up here at the headwaters of the great river, any man who even makes a beginning of violence against white men is a serious menace. Indians are always ready to listen to talk of a race war."

"Is this Black Hawk an Indian?"

"My information is that he is a *cafuzo*—a half-breed of Indian and negro."

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"Hm! Bad combination of bloods," said the North American. "Makes a merciless brute."

"Exactly, *senhor*. And Black Hawk has already shown that he is of that type. Now I have told you all I know of him—and I know this much only from reports which I believe to be trustworthy but which have passed through several mouths before reaching me. I should like to know more, and to hear it from my own men."

I made a new cigaret and tried to remember all I knew about the Indians of the country behind Viciado. It was not much, for nothing ever had happened which would take me into that place. Of the red men to the south and east, some of whom were cannibals and all of whom were wild, I knew a great deal, for chance had thrown me among them at various times.

But about all I could remember regarding those toward the Amazon was that they were of the Tucuna race and supposed to be tame; that they were more fond of drinking and dancing than of fighting or working, and that what work they did was mostly the making of clay jars and knitting bags from fiber-twine. Such people, it would seem, were hardly the sort to become warriors now. Yet I have noticed that sometimes men usually quiet and peaceable were more to be dreaded, when they did go on the war-path, than those who were always seeking trouble.

The more I thought about this fact, the more interested I became in the Tucunas and the man of the black name who would be a jungle king. So I glanced at Pedro and found his brown eyes gleaming with the same thought. For the moment I had forgotten about the North American. But as I turned toward the *coronel* I caught his steady gaze fixed on me, and the blue glimmer under his bushy brows spoke man-talk.

"You too, Senhor Tom?" I asked.

"Me too, old top!" he drawled. "I'm in on this play. Part of my official duties, you know. Something to add to the long-drawn report I'm going to write for the Rio chaps when I get around to it."

The *coronel* looked thoughtful. The North American eyed him keenly, blew a smoke-ring, and added:

"Don't take that remark too seriously, *coronel*. I'm not so bloated up over working for the government that I have to tell all I know. In fact, I took this exploring job only to satisfy my own curiosity as to what was in here.

"So if anything happens on this trip which needn't be reported to Rio—well, I can forget an awful lot in a remarkably short time. And if my presence is likely to handicap you fellows, Lourenço, go ahead without me. I'll just borrow a canoe and some grub and cartridges and go in there on my own."

"Ah—you understand, *senhor*, that the object of this trip is only to learn as much as possible concerning Black Hawk, not to attack him," said the *coronel*.

"I understand perfectly."

And Senhor Tom let one eyelid droop.

"We shall carry guns only for hunting purposes," he went on. "If any one accidentally gets shot it will be due to his own carelessness. What say, fellows? Do we go together or otherwise?"

"Together, certainly," I said, and Pedro grunted approval.

"Good! And how?"

We thought a while, and I asked Pedro whether he knew the bush in the direction of Viciado. He did not.

"If it were the season of high-water we could cross over by flood-channels to the Jutahy," I said then, "but it is not. So I suppose we must go to the Amazon and then inland."

"Poor plan," he disagreed. "Takes at least three hundred miles of water-travel to reach the town that way. Worse yet, Viciado is admittedly scared stiff by this Black Hawk, and he undoubtedly has more than one spy at work there. He'd know we were there long before we knew where he was. Our game is to work up on him from behind."

"How?" I demanded. "Have you a flying-machine which will put us behind him? Or are we to chop our way through a hundred miles of thick bush?"

"Neither. For once, I can show you jungle-rangers something. Remember, I came in here to explore. I have explored, especially west of the Jutahy; and I can show you the neatest little network of navigable creeks and rivers you ever saw, running from the Tecuahy eastward into the section we're after. They're not dried up now, either, and we can go by canoe. Wait till I get my maps."

He strode into his room. When he returned and put his maps on the *coronel's*

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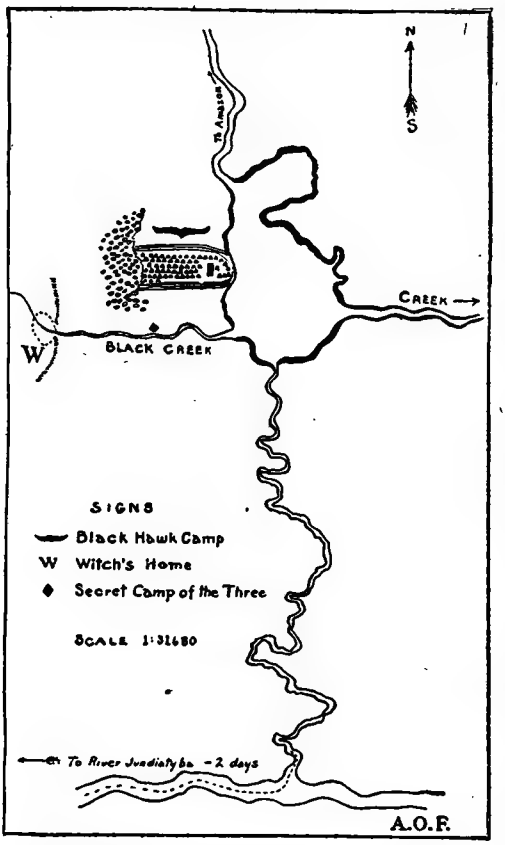
desk we found that he had spoken truth. His lines showed a network of water east of the Tecuahy, just as he said. If the maps were true—and he was ready to fight any man who said they were not—we could go by boat into the region we sought.

"You must know something of Black Hawk if you have been in there," Pedro suggested.



"Very little. Almost nothing. I heard there was a bad 'breed' somewhere in there, but never ran onto him and wasn't interested anyhow—didn't know he was ambitious to be king of the jungle. Haven't been at Viciado for five years, either, so haven't heard the Black Hawk gossip.

"Stopped there once when I was on my way down-river from the Marañon country. This time I went inland at the mouth of the Jutahy and worked west among the side-streams. But I sure am starting on the black gent's trail now. Let's see, what's the little bird that tackles the *caracara-i?*"

"The *bemtivi.*"

"Oh, sure. Well, that's us. The Bemtivi Brothers of the Brazilian Bush. Mister Black Hawk, you'd better tie a string around your tail-feathers. First thing you know you may get 'em yanked out."

II

IN A speedy but strong three-man canoe we left the headquarters on a windy morning. Out on the river the waves chased one another, and before we pushed out from the bank they slapped against the side of our dugout like hands.

"The river does not want us to go, Pedro," I said. "It is trying to drive us back on shore."

"You have it wrong," he disputed. "It is only giving us a friendly farewell and wishing us good fortune."

"That's the idea," Senhor Tom agreed. "Slapping us on the shoulder and saying, 'So long, fellows. Give 'em ——!'"

"And so say I, *senhor,*" nodded the *coronel,* who had walked down to the water to see us depart. "If you meet enemies, give them what you say. I regret that you leave me so soon, but we shall meet again. Perhaps when you return you will have had enough of roving for a time. Are you quite sure you can reach the Black Hawk country by way of the back-streams?"

"Dead sure," the blond man declared. "If these boys can put me on the Tecuahy I'll show the route from there. All we have to do is to hit the Ituhy, go down that to the Tecuahy, work over to the Capacete by creek, cut across to the Jundiatyba by other creeks, and then slide down that river toward the Amazon. Very simple."

Pedro and I blinked. The *coronel* chuckled.

"As you say, very simple," he echoed dryly. "It is all on the maps, yes? Then of course there can be no doubt. But the maps, I have noticed, are as thick with little lines as a monkey with hairs. If by any chance, *senhor,* you should get on the wrong hair—I mean the wrong line—let my men have their head. They are natural *matteiros*—woodsmen—and can smell their way through the thickest bush. *Adeos!* Go with God."

Out into the river we shoved the boat, and down-stream we rode into the wind. Looking back from the first turn, we saw the old *coronel* still standing there on the shore.

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One white-sleeved arm went up as we watched, and we tossed our paddles in reply. Then the current bore us around the bend and we saw only the thick growth lining the banks.

Senhor Tom twitched his hat a little farther down on the sunny side of his face, thumped out a lively measure with his paddle on the bottom of the boat, splashed it over the side, and heaved so hard that the tough shaft bent in his hands.

"Off again on a new trail!" he cried. "Lord, but it's good to be moving again! Nothing much to look forward to except maybe a scrap with our little friend Black Hawk, but we're going somewhere anyhow. Suppose I ought to be back yonder drudging over that gosh-awful report of mine; but I'd rather paddle twenty miles than write twenty words. Why in thunder does a man have to be so restless all the time?"

"I do not know, *senhor*, unless it is because he is alive." I answered. "And he will have to be quiet a long time after he is dead."

"About as good a reason as any. Guess the only thing that will ever keep me quiet will be the old man with the scythe. Either that or getting married—from which may the good Lord deliver us."

And he twirled his paddle twice around his head and began to sing:

"Merrily we roll along,
Roll along,
Roll along,
Merrily we roll along
Down the Javaree!"

Pedro, up in the bow, turned and grinned at me. We knew exactly how Senhor Tom felt, for we too were glad to be striking out on a new trail instead of attending to our regular duties as rubber-workers.

So it always is with us whose feet are restless; the start on a fresh venture finds us glad to be off, and the less we know about what lies ahead of us the more eager we are to go and see.

Now we timed our stroke to the singing of the blond man between us, and when he became silent we swung on with the same swift sway.

For hours we paddled around the loops of the crooked river. Then we slowed, watching the right bank. Ahead was a very sharp turn where the stream twisted abruptly from southeast to northwest before swinging eastward again; and at this turn a small, slow, but deep creek flowed in from the south. Over it the trees matted their branches so thickly that no sunlight came through, and the mouth of the narrow stream seemed only a gloomy cave in the bank.

"Here we say farewell to the river," I said. "We now start for the Tecuahy. This is our first cut-off—the Ygarapé da Morte."

"What's that? Ygarapé da Morte? Creek of Death?" exclaimed Mack. "You've picked a sweet-sounding stream to start in on. Looks as bad as it sounds, too. Any particular reason for the name?"

"Only that several men have gone up it and have not returned," I told him.

And I spoke of two men whom I knew, and others of whom I had heard, who had disappeared forever in that darkness. Each had gone in by canoe, and some time later the canoes had come out again—empty. And not one of the boats had shown bloodstains or other signs of attack.

"Umph! Spooky hole. Ever been in here yourself?"

I had. When the canoe of Moreira Macedo, one of the *coronel's* men, had been seen stuck at the mouth of that creek and other men refused to go in to see what had happened, I had paddled up for some distance alone, but had found no sign.

At that time the creek had been quite full and the shores so muddy and soft that I found no place to land; so I had come out again believing that Moreira must have drowned. He never was seen again.

"Well," said Senhor Tom, moving his rifle nearer with one foot, "let's go. If there's a man-eating demon up here we may have an interesting afternoon. Otherwise we'll ramble on. All aboard for the Ituhy, Tecuahy, Capacete, Jundiatyba and way stations, *via* the Creek of Death!"

And we left the sunny wind-swept river for the still, dark stream that crawled snakily out of the jungle.

The Creek of Death was not a cheerful place at any time; and now, coming into its smooth-creeping water and its solemn gloom after being tossed by the lively waves and dazzled by dancing sunbeams, it seemed even more deathlike than usual. No wind touched us now, no bird-voices came to our ears, nothing stood out clearly in the vague dimness around. And not only the light

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of the sun but its heat also had left us. The damp air felt clammy.

For a little way we moved very slowly, waiting for our eyes to become used to the murk. When the thick mass on either side dissolved into small trees and dangling *cipos* we put more power into our strokes and began to make fair speed up the water-lane. The tangled banks slipped away behind us for some time, and no danger showed itself. At length, reaching a spot where the sunlight fell through a small gap, we decided to halt a while and eat.

Without leaving the canoe we munched on a few mouthfuls of sun-dried monkey-meat with farinha, washing it down with gourds of water from the stream, which was cool and fairly clean. Then we made cigarets and rested.

Senhor Tom's cigaret was about half-smoked when he twitched his shoulders, turned, and scowled at the bush behind him.

"Got a chill," he grumbled. "Queer sort of chill, too. Feel as if somebody was watching me."

We scanned the jungle growth, but saw only a tangle of trees and some *cipos* hanging down from above or twined around thick trunks.

"It is because we are still and the air is so damp," said Pedro. "It is easy to become chilly in such a place. Perhaps we had best move onward into the sun."

But the North American kept on watching for a few minutes, then twisted himself about to face the other way.

"Don't feel it now," he said presently. "Since I got my back to you fellows I'm warm enough. But something or other keeps telling me to go ashore. Guess I'll go see if there's anything——"

Pedro and I glanced swiftly at each other. Then we picked up our guns.

"Stay here, *senhor*," I said. "We have had that feeling once or twice in the past and found that there was a reason for it. Keep quiet and look closely at everything."

And we began searching every foot of ground with our eyes.

Minutes dragged past. Then Pedro made a murmuring sound.

"I can see it now," he said quietly. "And it is much too close to us. That leaning *tartarugeira* tree, Lourenço, with the big *cipo* twisted around it—look at the butt. We must get away before we shoot. Paddle backward slowly."

I looked at the gnarled turtle-tree and the thick climber hugging the trunk. A chill went down my own back. Softly I sunk my paddle in the water, and we drifted down-stream.

"What is it?" asked the North American. "I don't see——"

Pedro's rifle cut him short. At the crash of the report I heaved hard on the paddle and the dugout jumped backward. At the same instant the *cipo* around that tree jumped also. It flew downward in a collapsing coil, and from the ground sounded a horrible hiss.

Pedro's gun roared again. Senhor Tom snatched his own rifle, leaped up, fired over my squatting partner's head. The false *cipo* hissed again and thrashed about in awful fury. Bushes flew in the air and the creek splashed into angry waves as the writhing body and bullet-torn head of the great serpent beat against earth and water. The spot where we had taken our ease became a welter of mud and blood.

Not until the guns were empty did my comrades quit shooting. By that time the snake had buried its head under the water, but its thick barrel, drilled through by heavy bullets and spouting red, still crushed down the surrounding bush in its death-agony. But we were out of its reach, and though the dugout rolled and pitched I had only to hang to a drooping branch and hold it safe.

"That, *senhor*, was what was calling you ashore," Pedro said coolly as he reloaded. "That was what chilled your back—the fixed gaze of the *sucuruju*. Did you not see its head on the ground?"

"By thunder, I didn't. And I was looking right at it, too. Couldn't see the blasted thing at all."

"That was because you were the one who was being summoned," I explained. "The power of the snake's eye was on you. We saw it because we were not called."

The explorer, still standing up and balancing to the roll of the boat, watched the struggle up ahead for a time before answering. Then, sitting down and feeding fresh cartridges into his magazine, he said—

"I've heard that stuff about snake-mesmerism before, but I never believed it."

"Yet you looked at it, less than twenty feet away, after Pedro had told you where it was—and could not see it."

"Uh-huh. I can see it plain enough now,

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anyhow. Say! We've wiped out the man-eater of the Creek of Death! Bet you he's the fellow that killed your friends!"

For the time we had forgotten where we were. Now, remembering the empty canoes which had come floating from this dismal stream, we nodded and looked with new hatred at the hideous thing twisting about on the bank.

"It must be so," I agreed. "Poor Moreira! Poor Affonso Costa! They could not draw their machetes in time."

Seeing that he looked a little puzzled, I explained.

"The machete, *senhor*, is your only hope if the *sucuruju* attacks you. He does not kill you instantly; he has to set himself to squeeze you dead. First he throws one swift loop around neck or body and sinks his fangs into your flesh in order to anchor himself. Then he coils around you and begins crushing—and you are gone.

"If you are not paralyzed with shock and fear by the sudden attack, you have a few seconds in which to chop him with your machete. He is scaly and hard, but if your knife is keen and your arm strong you can cut him enough to make him relax. Then chop again—attack him hard—and you can fight free. But you must work fast."

"And if his first loop nails your arms to your sides——"

"You die," Pedro finished.

Again Senhor Tom twitched his shoulders.

"Ugh!" he grunted. "Nice cheerful little place this, as I said before. Suppose now we'll have to stick here until this boneless wonder gets through doing the shimmy and lets us pass on. However, we have all the time in the world, and when we move we'll have a safe creek ahead."

He was not quite right. The Creek of Death was not yet safe. Nor will it ever be.

III

MANY men will tell you, *senhor*, that a snake, though killed, will "live" until sunset. It is an interesting story, but it is not true. I have killed many a snake, and, though some squirmed longer than others, I never have known one to writhe for any great length of time. Nor did the big *sucuruju* of the Ygarapé da Morte delay us very long.

True, the beast still was moving when we passed the point where stood the crooked turtle-tree, but its squirms had become only shivers toward the tail, and the red water above its buried head was quiet. In another half-hour or less we could have jabbed it with machetes without causing the slightest tremor.

On between the sloping bushy banks we drove, looping around turn after turn but steadily eating up the miles into the south. At times we found the water so shallow that we had to shorten our holds on the paddles; but we never quite scraped the bottom, and always the depth increased after a few rods. Our eyes now were so accustomed to the shadows that we could have spied instantly any menacing movement on either side, and our ears were ever alert for any sound. But no sound or movement except our own was on that lonely creek.

Hour after hour we forged ahead until at length camping time approached. Then, as we looked forward for a good place to sling our hammocks and make a palm-leaf shelter, we found the banks sinking and the creek broadening out. Soon we came into better light. The trees ended, the bush thinned, and the dropping sun shot long slanting shadows across tall grass covering level land through which the *ygarapé* flowed lazily.

Off to the right, a short gunshot away, rose a good-sized hill where lofty trees stood, and from those trees came the chattering of monkeys and parrots. It looked to be a good place to get fresh meat and make our camp.

But the creek did not flow close to the hill. Instead, it veered away to the left. In the wet season all this low *ygapo* would be far under water and the hill itself half-covered; but now the flat land must be crossed on foot before the height could be reached.

"Never like to get far from my canoe at night," said Senhor Tom. "A sudden rain, and you may wake up to find your boat gone. But that sure looks like a made-to-order camp-ground."

"I do not think we need fear losing the canoe tonight," Pedro replied. "We shall tie it with a long rope to allow for any rise of water. I will go now and look at that hill. Ah, there is a path."

As he said, a small path ran away from the edge of the water toward the hill. We pushed the canoe to it and looked at it before getting out. In it were no footmarks. Yet it was a track showing signs of use,

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leading straight into the high grass toward the trees.

"An animal runway of some kind," Senhor Tom judged. "Used by things up on the hill, most likely. Go ahead, Pedro. We'll get out the hammocks and other stuff."

Pedro stepped lightly away along the trail, rifle ready. We started to unload what few things we should need for the night.

As I stepped into the soft mud beside the path my feet sank slowly. I thought nothing of it, as I was accustomed to mud. I only spread my toes and leaned over the canoe, seeking the salt-bag and extra cartridges. The salt was not in sight, so I turned over several other food-bags and finally found it. By that time I had sunk half-way to my knees.

"Rotten mess of mud here," grumbled Senhor Tom. "Soft and sticky. Wonder where the bottom is. I'm still going down."

True enough, the mud had crawled up higher on his legs than on mine. With an irritated laugh he tried to pull up his feet. They stuck. And I too was still going down.

And then, from a place a little beyond us in the tall grass, came Pedro's voice. Cool and calm it was, but deadly serious.

"Comrades," it said, "do not land. This place is a death-trap. A *mondongo*."

For the second time that day a chill crawled down my back. A *mondongo* is not land. It is only a crust, half-hardened by the sun, grown over with grass. Under it is mud so soft that it is almost water. Sink through that crust and the sucking, suffocating slime beneath it ends you and buries you both at once. The only animal with legs that can cross such places is the web-footed water-hog, the capybara. A death-trap in truth.

"Senhor Tom!" I gasped. "Grab the canoe and lift yourself by your arms! Quick!"

We both dropped everything into the boat and seized the sides. As it happened we had drawn the craft well up, and though it turned partly over beneath our weight it stayed where it was. The flat, broad side sank only an inch or two into the hardened upper crust, then held firm. With a heaving, gasping, kicking struggle we tore our legs out of the slimy grip of the lower mud and tumbled into the canoe.

"Pedro!" I shouted. "Where are you?"

"In the mud. Going down. *Adeos*, comrades."

His voice still was calm, but with the strained calmness of a man facing certain death.

"*Vive Deus!*" I yelled. "You do not go alone!"

And I scrambled up to jump toward him. But Senhor Tom seized me with an iron hand.

"One minute!" he snapped, the words coming like bullets. "Wait. Pedro! Are you in the path?"

"No. I stepped off. Do not come to me."

"Oh, we're coming. Don't fool yourself about that. Throw yourself as flat as possible and spread out."

"I have done that. It is useless."

"Not by a —— sight it isn't! Hold hard!"

Then to me he said:

"The path! Keep in the path! It's firmer and may hold us. Go ahead."

With that he tore at the bags as if hunting something. I was out and away at once, running fast but as lightly as possible. The path was solid enough to hold me up, but I felt it quiver underfoot.

Only a few rods away I found Pedro. He was not more than ten feet off the path, but he had no more chance of reaching it than if those ten feet were ten miles. The sucking mud had drawn him down to his thighs, and slowly but steadily he was sinking deeper.

As he had told us, he had thrown his body flat, and lay with arms outstretched and fists gripping at the grass-roots. But the treacherous crust, though it held up his trunk, was settling under him so that he lay in a shallow trough which gradually grew deeper; and in spite of his clutch at the loosely rooted stalks the weight of his mired legs was pulling him backward and downward with a creeping slowness terrible to see.

He had stopped trying to kick his legs clear, realizing that this only made him sink faster. But he still was fighting stubbornly for life, pulling with his hands at the grass and the mud-crust and trying to overcome the downward drag at his feet by the power of his arms. Great drops of sweat rolled off his face and body, his muscles and his temple-veins stood out like cords under his skin, and he gasped as if locked in a

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death-grapple with some powerful human enemy.

For an instant I was on the point of throwing myself forward to grasp his hands and add my own strength to his. But he saw me and panted:

"Back! You will break through. Go!"

Sense enough remained in me to realize that I should indeed break through if I stepped out of the path, and I remained in it. Then came the North American running from the creek, carrying a coil of thin but strong rope.

"All right, old top!" he called, swiftly unrolling the coil. "We'll snake you out of there in a jiffy. When I get these loops made, work them down over your shoulders and under your arms."

With fast-working hands he made at each end of the rope a sliding noose. Then, holding the rope by the middle, he cast the nooses within reach of our trapped comrade.

"One arm at a time," he cautioned. "Keep your grip on the grass with the other hand. Get both loops around your chest. That's the stuff. Now don't move for a minute. Lourenço, get hold here! Now step away along the path. Spread your legs and set your feet so that the push on this crust won't all come at the same point. We've got to distribute the strain all we can."

As he commanded, I grasped the rope and went onward two or three yards, got a small loop around each hand, and braced myself. Pedro, letting go with one hand and then with the other, had shoved the nooses down around him. The rope now lay like a triangle, with one of us at each corner.

"Now, no yanking or heaving!" Senhor Tom warned. "It has to be a clean, strong, steady pull. If we yank we go through. Maybe we will anyway, but there's a chance that we won't if we hold steady. Pedro, you can kick and claw—help yourself any way you can. All set, Lourenço? Let's go!"

We settled back. Smoothly we put all our power into the steady pull that might win. In a few seconds I was tugging with all my strength. I heard the North American's bones and muscles crack with the strain of his draw. Pedro's face knotted with the pain of the cutting cord. He hooked his fingers into the grass-roots and pulled toward us. His back moved as he worked his legs in the lower muck. But for a long minute he stayed where he was.

Then, slowly, he slipped a little nearer to us. We strained backward farther. Again he slid an inch—three inches—more yet. With a squirming wriggle he got one leg partly clear.

Suddenly my left foot broke through the surface and plunged down almost to the knee.

I had to quit pulling. But my grip on the rope held me from falling backward, and for the moment I used it and Pedro's weight to draw my leg clear. Then I moved a little nearer to Senhor Tom, braced again, and renewed my drag at the cord.

The new pull was all Pedro needed. He came sliding forward more than a foot along his trough. His legs, smeared with black filth, came out into the air. As we took up the slack he gave a choked groan and shook his head, and when we eased up he scrambled toward us for a yard, then flattened and wrenched at the ropes around his chest. He loosed them enough to get more air into his pinched lungs before he moved on again. Then, still keeping flat, he worked his way to the path.

I suddenly felt weak. The strain of fear for my partner had taken far more of my strength than the bitter pulling at the rope. I wanted to sit down. But as I glanced downward I saw that I must move away. The crust had sunk under me so that I was standing in a shallow bowl, and it might let me through at any instant.

Senhor Tom also was in a bowl. He saw the danger and moved away.

"Out of here!" he snapped. "We'll all be in the soup in another minute. Move quick!"

As I could not move toward him without making his part of the path sink deeper, I stepped swiftly the other way until I was on new ground. Pedro, his breath rasping in his throat, still lay on the path until he had cast off one noose. And then, when we expected him to rise and get away from there, he turned and began creeping out again.

"Pedro! Are you mad?" I cried.

"I dropped my rifle," was all the answer he gave me.

And, working along in his prone position, he crawled over the bending crust, avoiding the hole from which he had just escaped until he reached his gun lying a yard farther on. With this in hand he came snaking back

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in the same way. Reaching the path, he sat up and laughed shakily.

"I think, comrades, that we had best not camp here tonight" he said. "Perhaps some day we shall all go into the Bottomless Pit, but we are not yet ready for it."

"Stop your foolishness and move!" I growled. "I will not break my back to pull you out of a second hole."

"I did not ask you to pull me out of this one," he grinned.

But he stood up, pulled the other noose off over his head, and began to walk toward me.

"The other way," I told him, thinking he had lost his sense of direction.

He kept on coming.

"I want to see what makes this path," he said. "I think I know, but I want to be sure."

"Well, you double —— fool!" the North American swore. "Haven't you brains enough to let well enough alone? Go drown yourself, then!"

And he turned back toward the boat, growling like a dog with a sore ear. Pedro grinned again.

"Go on, Lourenço," he said. "Let us look. We are safe enough as long as we stay on this track and keep moving."

I scolded, but I went ahead, realizing that he spoke sense. If the crust here was tough enough to stand the strain we had just put on it, we were in no danger now unless we stood still too long. As we went onward I asked why he had first left the path.

He said he had seen something moving the grass and had gone toward it, finding nothing. Then he had stood still watching, and thinking nothing of the fact that he was sinking, until he found that instead of stopping he was going down faster. It then was too late to get out.

For perhaps a hundred feet we moved on toward the hill, finding the footing fairly firm. Then I stopped with a grunt.

"Ah. As I thought," said Pedro.

Before us the grass faded away, sweeping off to right and left and rimming the foulest hole I ever saw. The crust on which we walked came to an end, and beyond was a slimy mass of fluid muck in which only one kind of creature could live—the most loathsome creature known to man. The black ooze was packed with snakes.

It was a nest of *sucurujus*. Some were at least thirty feet long and nearly as thick-bodied as a man, others no bigger than eels. Many of them were asleep, and none was active, though some were crawling lazily over others. They were tangled among one another so that it was hard to tell where any one of them began—a mass of hideous blue-gray bodies basking in the warmth of the sun-heated slime; death resting in death.

I lifted my rifle. But then I let it sink. It would take many precious cartridges to destroy half of those reptiles, and those cartridges must not be wasted. Besides, the crust on which we stood was thinner here at the hole, and already it was sinking too fast under our combined weight. We could not linger even if we wished to; and I had no wish to.

"Shoot the two largest ones," Pedro muttered over my shoulder. "Then get away fast. I will take that big one to the right. Ready?"

I aimed quickly at a huge head in the middle of the mass. Our guns crashed together. Instantly we wheeled and ran.

And we ran none too soon. The path rolled and shook under us and the grass all around swayed and dipped as the two serpents leaped and thrashed in their death-flurry. Hisses burst out, and the ugly tangle must have gone squirming in every direction from the hole. But we saw nothing of that. We dashed straight to the creek, and there we pushed out the canoe and tumbled aboard.

Senhor Tom asked no questions, but sank his paddle in the water and shoved the dugout up-stream. Not until we had gone a mile and found a passable camping-spot did we talk. Then we told him of what we had seen and done.

We knew now what had made that smooth trail. When the last flood had drained away toward the far-off eastern sea, and the sun had not yet hardened the top of the muck, the water-boas had sought that hole and made it their breeding-home; and from time to time they had crawled to the creek to hunt, their heavy bodies pressing down the half-dried mud into a rut which later became tougher than the loose matter on either side. Their path now had lured a man into the jaws of death, yet helped to save him.

"And I'm willing to bet," the explorer added when we spoke of this, "that the bones of more than one missing man are

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hidden in that black slime. The big snake down-stream may have got one or two, but not all. A lone man caught as you were, Pedro, would have no chance."

"No chance indeed, *senhor*," my comrade agreed. "This is truly a Creek of Death. When we come back we shall warn our mates at headquarters, and perhaps block up the mouth of this stream with trees, so that no man shall wander in here again."

"Good idea. I'll help—when we come back."

IV

IN THE next few days we worked slowly but steadily toward the little river Ituhy, which flows into the Tecuahy about seventy miles above its mouth, and itself is some forty miles long. To reach it we had to labor across from the Creek of Death to two other *ygarapés* in turn—the Iraité and the Rodrigues—traveling now almost due east and toiling along small wandering side-streams and through shrunken weedy lagoons.

More than once we had to use poles instead of paddles, and a few times we even had to get out on shore and haul the canoe along the stream to deeper water. And at the head of the Rodrigues, where we again turned south to strike the source of the Ituhy, we had to make what the North American called "portages"—cut paths through the jungle with our machetes, carry everything except the canoe across in packs, then strew short poles in the paths and drag the boat over the poles to the next pool or little stream.

This was hot, hard work, and once Senhor Tom grumbled that we ought to have a light "canvas canoe" such as he said was used in his own country. But then he admitted that snags would ruin the bottom of such a craft, and that for our jungle the solid *itauba* stonewood dugouts were best, even though heavy.

And in spite of the time and toil it cost us to cross from stream to stream, we saved many miles of paddling and reached the mouth of the Ituhy days sooner than if we had gone down the Javary and then up the Tecuahy.

Pedro and I knew all that country west of the Tecuahy well enough to make no mistakes in moving about, whether the waters were high or low; and Senhor Tom never looked at any map until we had crossed the Tecuahy and camped on its eastern shore.

Then, as we smoked after breakfast, Pedro said:

"Now, *senhor*, your turn comes. We have traveled more than a hundred *milhas* without looking at hair-lines on paper, and we are here without mishap. Let us see now what your charts can do for us."

"Oh, very well," he smiled. "You fellows can grin all you want to at me and my maps, but if I don't set you spank on the Jundiatyba I'll lie down and let you kick me hard. The little old Jundiatyba will float us clear to the Amazon, if we want to go that far. No more boat-hauling after we're in it."

And he opened his map-case, glanced over a chart, measured a line with a finger-nail, watched the flow of the Tecuahy a minute, and then told us that after four hours of easy paddling down-stream we should find a creek opening on the east shore. There we should leave the river and head for the sources of the river Capacete.

We nodded; for we knew, though we had not told him so, that a creek did flow into the Tecuahy at the place of which he spoke. With no questions, we shoved off and slid away down the current.

Yet we did not reach the mouth of that creek in four hours, for we tarried nearly an hour at a lonely hut where we found a launch tied up to take aboard more wood for fuel.

It was the regular boat from Iquitos, Peru, which goes up the Tecuahy once a month to carry supplies to the few *seringales* scattered along its two-hundred-mile banks, and the little clearing where it had stopped was one of its usual places for getting wood.

Its crew and the old man who sold the fuel were the first men we had seen since leaving our own river, and naturally we wanted to talk—or rather to listen to their talk, since we had no intention of telling all the world what we planned to do.

We were asked, of course, what we did there, and I said we had been out on a rubber-scouting trip. This was perfectly true; we had been on such a trip—before the *coronel* sent us eastward.

When we were asked where we had been and what we had found, we only laughed and looked wise, so our questioners believed our tale and believed also that we had discovered something too good to tell about.

Then, like men fresh from the back-bush,

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we asked for any news of affairs down the river, and got what we wanted—a warning against Black Hawk.

It would be well, the boatmen said, for us to sleep on the western bank until we reached the Javary. The man called Caracara-i was somewhere in the jungle east of the river, and one could not tell what he might do. Certainly the North American *senhor* with us would be likely to die if Black Hawk met us, unless he could pay well for his life.

No, they did not know whether the *cafuzo* was near this river now; he might be many miles away; but the report was that he was not near Viciado, so he must be somewhere farther back.

When we pretended ignorance of Black Hawk, we heard almost the same tale the *coronel* had told us. All the big river was talking of him, the boatmen said, but nobody seemed to do anything but talk. Little was known now of what went on at the town of Viciado, for the Amazon steamers had stopped calling there

The latest report—that Black Hawk now was away—had been brought by a man of Viciado who, with his woman, had fled upriver in a canoe because they dared not stay there longer.

The news that the big river-boats had quit stopping at Viciado made us ask why. We got an answer that made us scowl. Black Hawk was greedy for women. And the last steamer to call at Viciado had among its passengers an Englishman with a pretty daughter, who had insisted on going ashore to walk about the town. They disappeared as if the earth had swallowed them.

Before the boat went onward, its men searched the place so thoroughly that it seemed even a rat could not have evaded them. But no sign of the missing foreigners could be found, nor could any one who would admit knowing about them.

So the steamers stopped there no more, and the word was given out that until the people of the upper river produced either the missing pair or those who had made away with them, Viciado could remain cut off from the world. Not even the small trading-boats of the river would call there now.

The man and the woman who had recently deserted the place by canoe could not, or would not, tell what had happened to the English couple, we heard. They said they were both dead drunk at the time and knew nothing of the matter. Besides, they were such a lying worthless pair that even if they should happen to tell the truth nobody would know whether to believe it.

As we could learn no more, we resumed our paddling. For awhile we said nothing. Then Senhor Tom spoke in a hard, cold tone.

"I'm getting right interested in this Black Hawk. If we meet him I wouldn't be a danged bit surprized if something dropped."

"We are with you in that, *senhor*," said Pedro, his voice even. "An Englishman more or less is nothing to me, but a foul black brute that steals white girls must die."

"Yet, to give the devil his due," I said, "there is no proof that Black Hawk had any hand in this affair. Judging from what I hear, the men of Viciado are not the kind to be trusted at the backs of a prosperous-looking stranger and a handsome young woman. It is quite possible that they know much more about the fate of those two than does Black Hawk himself."

"Oh, that Viciado bunch is only a pack of curs," scoffed the North American.

"Yet even a pack of curs is brave enough to jump at the back of an unsuspecting man," I persisted.

"True," he admitted. "All the same, I opine that Black Hawk ought to be rubbed out on general principles. How do you vote on that proposition?"

"With you," I said.

And we paddled on in silence.

In the hot blaze of noonday we reached our creek and turned into its cool shade. And at sunset, after forest journey which seemed easy after our work on the other side of the river, we camped on the western shore of a northward-flowing stream which our explorer-guide said was the Capacete.

"So far, so good," said Senhor Tom. "We never fell off the hair-line once, did we, Pedro? And tomorrow we'll be better off than we are today—we have two hairs to crawl on instead of one. Which will you have?"

He passed the map to us, but we could make little of it.

"All hairs look alike to me," said Pedro. "Choose your own, and we will try to creep along it."

"Oh, very well. We'll take this wabbly hair with knobs on it—the knobs being lagoons, if you want to know. For the next

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couple of days we have to twist around like drunken mud-worms, but after that we can straighten out and go somewhere."

He spoke truth. In following that wabbly hair with knobs on it we traveled in every direction known, except up into the tree-tops. The little stream was hardly more than a thread, and it wound all around itself in going from one lagoon to another. Yet it held water enough to float us along, and two days later we came out into a broad creek full of sunlight.

As we entered it Pedro held up a hand.

Out from the thick growth beyond us rose a clear, sweet song like the voice of a girl ringing out in wordless happiness. The tone changed smoothly into notes so like those of a flute that it seemed as if some one had taken the song from the lips of the girl and was pouring it from a musical instrument. Then came some long, slow, mellow tones as if a new song were beginning—and silence.

We listened, but heard it no more. Nothing but the harsh squawk of some distant parrots and the buzz of near-by mosquitoes came to us.

"*Realejo*—the organ-bird," Pedro explained.

"Right. I've heard it before," said the explorer. "And we now are on the Jundiatyba. This is its head. A clear trail now to the land of Black Hawk. Let's go."

But he did not dip his paddle at once. He looked across, sober-faced, at the place where that girlish bird-voice had sung. Watching, I read his thought. Not long ago, before ever she saw Viciado, that young white girl on the steamer perhaps had sung as joyously and sweetly as the songster of the forest. And now——

V

WITH the seventy-league Jundiatyba flowing free under us, and the way to Black Hawk's nest open ahead, we became more bold and more cautious both at once. From sunrise until nearly sundown we paddled with long regular swing and with no attempt at concealment, ready to give fight to any one who wanted it. But at night we took pains to hide our camps and mask our fires.

The stream soon widened from a creek into a river of respectable depth, wandering on between the usual bush-grown banks and inhabited by numbers of birds which more than once made us cease paddling a moment and hold the blades ready for a blow.

They were those diving birds called snake-necks, which feed under water for a time and then suddenly shoot slender wriggling necks up for more than a foot above the surface, looking so much like snakes that at first sight a boatman can not see what they really are.

There were real snakes too in that water, and between them and the birds the upper part of the river seemed a little too reptilian to be pleasant. Yet no harm came to us, and for days we drove on toward the Amazon without seeing sign of man.

Then, up a little side-stream, we found Indians.

Late on a sweltering day, when we were looking along the shores for a good place to hide and make camp, we saw at the right a ravine which looked promising. Arriving there, we found that water ran a little way into it from the river and stopped. And at the farther end of the little cove, partly hidden under drooping brush, lay two canoes. From these a little path led up the ravine.

We stood a minute looking along the valley, which now was dry but which in the flood season would be a deep *ygarapé*. It was the right place for an Indian settlement, and the fact that only two canoes lay there showed that it must be small.

"I think we had best visit these people," I said. "We are not yet near Black Hawk's headquarters, and Indians dwelling in such a quiet spot as this probably will be friendly. Let us see."

But we did not have to go to the settlement to find whether its people were sociable. As we pulled our bow up on shore a man appeared from behind a tree where he had been watching us.

Calmly he stepped down and stood near, looking at each of us in turn. And though I never before had been on this river, I recognized his tribe and knew we should be welcome. His skin was not dark, but a light red-brown; and on his face was tattooed a large square blue patch. He was a Passé.

The Passés are perhaps the highest type of Indians to be found in our upper Amazon country. Old men who could remember far back and who also carried in memory the talk of their fathers, have told me that once

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the Passés were a big, powerful tribe who controlled the river-lands from the Rio Negro to Peru.

Now they are few, and those few live usually in small settlements hidden in the bush along the smaller rivers, where they can be at peace and raise crops on their plantations. Always they have been friends to white men. And the pity of it is, *senhor*, that this friendliness has been their ruin.

One reason for this, I have heard, was that their women were handsome. White men coming into this wild country, having no women of their own race, took the shapely Passé girls for their wives, and so the number of mothers among the villages of that tribe steadily grew fewer.

Nor was that all. The children too were lured away from their homes to become servants of the big-river whites, and when they grew up they mated with white men or with *mestiços* of other Indian races. So the blood of the Passés slowly died out.

But this mingling of their blood with that of others was not the only cause of the passing of the Passés. Much more deadly to them was a disease brought upon them by the white men; the *defluxo*.

To us Brazilians, *defluxo* is only a cold in the head; but to the Passés it is death. Where we should merely blow our noses and sneeze a few days and then be rid of our cold, the Passés get a slow fever which becomes *tisica*—consumption. And a queer thing is that these people often catch the disease from whites who themselves have no sign of a cold or other ailment. The very air around a white visitor to their settlements seems to hold death for them.

Yet the friendship of the Passés lasts to the end. Knowing that the white man is their doom, they still give welcome to him—even if he shows by red eyes and running nose that he brings the fatal disease.

If we whites found that Indians coming among us brought a plague we should drive them out, and if they still came we probably should shoot them on sight. But the Passés raise no hand against us. They only ask of visitors whether they bring the disease.

So it was now. The tall, middle-aged Indian looked us in the eyes and then spoke gravely in the Tupi *lengoa geral*.

"Do you bring *defluxo?*"

"No," I answered. "No *defluxo* rides in our canoe."

"It is well. Do you come to visit us?"

"We go to the great river. We are glad to meet our friends the Passés."

He nodded politely, turned back to the tree, and picked up a couple of good-sized fish. Then he walked before us up the ravine, and as he went he explained why he had taken cover on seeing us. He had been fishing from the bank, and with the sun in his eyes he could not at first tell whether we were *Cariwa camarah* or *Tapanyuh uyukahn*—friendly whites or a black enemy.

When he spoke of a black enemy we glanced at one another, but we said nothing at the time. We trailed behind him as he went on up the narrow valley and climbed its right side into a cleared space. There we found a couple of shed-like shelters and several small mud-walled houses, behind which lay a fair-sized plantation of mandioca, melons, corn and cane.

In that garden field a number of figures were moving about, and at a fire under one of the shelters a couple of women were busy cooking. The smoke drifted lazily away in the slanting sunshine, and from some bush beyond the houses rang the loud, cheerful notes of a musical *tanana* cricket tuning up for his night-song.

"A little idyl of content," said Senhor Tom.

And though we did not know just what sort of thing an idyl might be, we nodded; for to our jungle-weary eyes the peaceful little opening in the forest seemed filled with simple trust and faith and friendliness.

Up to the cooking-fires went our host to give the fish to the women. One of these was plump and no longer young, but far from bad-looking. The other was a slender maiden who gazed shyly at us from great dark eyes and then dropped her head.

To them the man said a few words which I did not catch, but which evidently told them we were friends; for the older woman smiled frankly at us and then began to talk so fast that I could make nothing of it.

When she stopped for breath I told her and the others that our names were Thomaz, Pedro, and Lourenço. In return we learned that the tall man's name was Lontra, meaning "Otter;" that the maiden was Merere, which in Tupi means "Arrow;" and that the talkative woman was called Itariapu. This last made us grin, for *itariapu* means a place where water comes rushing noisily over rocks—a rapid. And when she saw our smiles she started talking more rapidly than before.

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The tall Otter grunted, and we followed him into another hut, leaving the woman still pouring out words. As we walked I saw Pedro glance back and smile, so I also looked back. As I expected, the girl was looking after my handsome comrade. She smiled too, then lowered her rosy face again to her work.

"Careful, Pedro!" I muttered. "Arrows are dangerous."

"But not fatal unless they strike the heart," he said.

Then we entered the house of the Otter. And there the rest of the little tribe came to meet us and give us respectful welcome.

In all they numbered not more than twenty, and none was old. About half of them were children, and of the five men living there only one was past thirty—a long, lean, silent Indian who was the brother of Lontra but did not appear to have Lontra's wiry strength.

By far the best-looking man of the lot was a straight, lithe young fellow with deep eyes who moved with the easy grace of a cat, and whose name fitted him well—Jawuah, or "Jaguar." I looked from him to Pedro, and from Pedro back at him, and it was hard to decide which of the two was the more manly in appearance. Jawuah himself gazed with interest at my comrade and then gave him a friendly smile.

There was not much talk at first. All stood or squatted around while the Otter poured gourds of a reddish liquor from a big clay jar and handed them to us, afterward motioning to a couple of hammocks in which Senhor Tom and I sat down. Pedro remained standing while he drank some of the liquor from his gourd and then passed it to Jawuah.

The Jaguar took it, drained it, and laughed. And all the others, watching the two tall young fellows drink from the same gourd, broke out into laughing chatter and eyed my comrade approvingly. Pedro grinned back at them, then leaned against a roof-post and made a cigaret.

"Go on and start the palaver, Lourenço," said Senhor Tom. "I can talk the Tupi lingo all right, but you're probably more used to it than I."

So, seeing that Lontra was chief here, I began a talk with him.

"The family of the Otter is young and strong. I see no old or sick."

"The old are gone to their fathers. The *defluxo* took them," he explained.

"Better the *defluxo* than the hand of an enemy. Who is the black enemy who would harm the Otter?"

"No enemy will harm the Otter. The Otter knows how to dodge the hawk."

"The enemy then is a hawk? A black hawk?"

"It is so. Caracara-i. May he choke and fall dead on the dirt."

"Why should the hawk strike at the otter? They do not hunt on the same ground."

"True. But this Black Hawk of the north hunts young otters."

"She-otters?"

"It is so. He destroys the young shes. So the Otter must watch and hide the young from his evil claws."

"This Black Hawk has been here?"

"Not yet. But the word of him has gone through the forest, and in time he will come—he or his smaller hawks."

"So. And the Otter then will hide the young she-otters from his sight? Why does not the Otter kill him?"

Lontra frowned. It was not a fair question, and he gave me the answer I deserved.

"How?" he demanded. "We are few. We have no guns. Caracara-i has guns and many men. He rules the land. He drives the whites, who also have guns, into the great river.

"Once the Passés were great, and then they would have squashed this creature like a bug. Now they are weak, and soon they will be no more. Why do not the white men, who have taken the strength from the Passés, kill this Black Hawk instead of running from him? Have the white men too lost their strength?"

"No!" I denied. "They have only begun to notice this Black Hawk and to wonder what sort of creature he is. If any man tells the Otter that Caracara-i rules this land and drives white men into the river, that man speaks with a split tongue. Black Hawk is only a small bird who thinks himself great, and those who follow him are fools. Before long the white men will shoot him out of his tree."

Lontra looked me straight in the eyes, and I looked straight back at him. After a minute he turned his gaze to Senhor Tom. The North American nodded. He threw his rifle over his shoulder, aimed upward as

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if at a bird, let the gun sink, and moved his hand downward with a fluttering motion; then bent, reached as if picking a dead thing off the ground, and waved his hand aside with a sneer on his face.

Every eye watched him. And when he sat back, an approving growl broke from Jawuah. For the moment the Indians almost believed they had seen the white man kill the Black Hawk.

I did some thinking. These Passés hated Black Hawk. There must be other Passés in this Jundiatyba country. Perhaps the Tucunas also were not all under the control of the *cafuzo* who thought himself king. An idea began to grow in my head.

"Who follows Caracara-i?" I asked "Passés?"

"No Passés. Tucunas. We Passés always have been the white man's friends, and we join no enemy of the white man."

"And why is the hand of the Tucunas turned against the whites? What have the whites done to them?"

"Nothing. But they are told that soon many white men will come here to cut down the trees and make all this land a great plantation, on which the Tucunas must work as slaves or be beaten to death. But if they join together under Black Hawk they can drive out the whites who now are here and scare away those who intend to come here. So the land will be safe for them to live in as they always have lived."

"They are fools!" I repeated. "Such talk is lying talk. The white men do not want this land of flood and mud. But if the Tucunas make war on the whites, then the whites will fight back, and in the end the foolish Tucunas will be killed. Who told the Otter this tale?"

"A pair of Tucunas."

"Men of the Hawk?"

"I do not know. But they warned us to hide our young women from Caracara-i. They said many Tucunas hid their daughters from him."

His eyes traveled to one of the girls as he spoke. I saw that she was Merere, the shy young Arrow, who had stolen in to hear what was said. And I saw also that the lithe Jawuah was looking at her with sober gaze. My idea grew swiftly.

"So the Tucunas themselves dare not trust their leader. Again I say they are fools to follow him. When he becomes great and rules all, who shall be safe? He can hunt down all the young women, and the man who would defend his own daughter will be killed—or worse. Will you let Merere here be dragged away to please that foul brute for a week and then be murdered?"

Terror flashed into the face of Merere. Again a growl came from the men—a hoarse rumble of anger. At once I went on.

"You can save her and many other girls. The Tucunas and the Passés are friends, is it not so?"

"It is so."

"Then go among them and tell them the truth that we tell you; that the white man wishes them no harm, and that Black Hawk is a liar and their worst enemy. He grows great only because no man opposes him. By the time the white men make up their minds to destroy him he will be stronger—and your own young women may be his victims. Now is the time to act.

"We are the first white men to come against the Hawk. We go to learn what we can of him, so that the other white men outside may know. Will the Passés help us? Will the Otter and the Jaguar go with us to spread the truth among the Indians? Or will they hide here like scared monkeys in a hollow tree?"

Lontra and Jawuah looked at each other. They looked at Merere and at the other young girls. Slowly their faces flamed. And as one man they promised—

"We will go!"

VI

INTO the middle of our conference came Itariapu, talking so loudly that we had to turn to her. She had remained at her cooking work until she lost her temper—probably because there was nobody to talk to—and now she demanded help from every young one in the place. The girls went slowly to the fire, where we heard her still clattering on so fast that nobody had a chance to tell her what had been decided on.

We were quite as well satisfied to have the women out of the way, though I noticed again that young Jawuah's eyes followed the winsome maid Merere. When they were gone we again filled our gourds with the red *cauim* and drank success to ourselves and ruin to Black Hawk. Then we asked Lontra whether he had heard anything of a white man and a white girl who

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had come up the great river in one of the big fire-canoes and disappeared at Viciado.

He had not. He never went down to the big river, he said, and all he knew of matters outside his little home was what he heard from other Passés not many miles away. None of his neighbors had spoken of such a thing.

So then we asked about those other Passés of whom he spoke, and learned that they numbered perhaps thirty or forty. Besides these there were a few small tribes of the same dying race scattered around in various nooks between the Javary and the Jutahy, but altogether they probably would not total more than fifty or sixty men of fighting age. The Otter admitted this sadly, as if mourning the fact that his nation could not prove its friendship by bringing many spears and bows to back the whites.

But we told him his help and that of the other Passés in opening the eyes of the Tucunas to the truth would be worth far more than weapons of war, besides saving the lives of many who otherwise would perish. I took care to repeat over and over that the white men now had no enmity toward the Tucunas and that they would have none in future unless the Indians showed themselves to be foes; but that when the whites did strike they would strike hard, and the innocent must pay with the guilty. This was the most important thing to put into the ears of any Tucunas willing to listen, and I made sure that Lontra got it fixed firmly in mind.

Then we had to stop talking and eat, for Itariapu had prepared the night meal to suit herself and now insisted that all attend to the feast while everything was tasty. We were not sorry to do so, for our appetites were strong and the meal very good.

As the water now was low, the Indians had captured their yearly supply of turtles, and we were served with *sarapatel*—turtle soup boiled in the upper shell of the dead reptile—and sweet, tender turtle steaks cut from the breast.

There were also iguana eggs, eaten raw with *farinha* and salt, which Pedro and I liked well enough, though Senhor Tom did not relish them because they were too oily for his taste. Besides these we had large portions of the *acari* fish caught by the Otter, plenty of bananas, and all the *cauim* we cared to drink.

Itariapu fussed around us while we ate, so anxious to make sure we visitors had plenty that she became rather tiresome. She need not have worried about Pedro, for he was attended every minute by Merere, who took care that he got good portions of everything on the mats. If Jawuah noticed this he gave no sign of it. Indeed, he gave no sign of anything but hunger, shoveling away with both hands until I began to wonder where he put all his food.

By the time the meal was over, night had come, and the children soon were sent to bed in the mud-walled houses. The rest of us sat or squatted in the open shelter where we had eaten; we three travelers smoking and sipping more *cauim*, the Passé men talking among themselves, the young women watching us and smiling whenever they caught our eyes, and Itariapu—as usual—talking to everybody.

Just as I was beginning to pity Lontra for having to live with a woman whose tongue clattered so much, he turned calmly to her.

"Be still," he said.

The words were spoken so quietly that we hardly heard them. But the woman stopped as if hit by a club. I wasted no more pity on the Otter. He was master in his own house.

"The Otter and the Jaguar alone will go to carry the word," Lontra told us. "The brother of the Otter and his sons stay here to protect the young and the women. When the Otter and the Jaguar tell the Passés that they have looked into the eyes of the white men and seen there the light of truth, the Passés then will carry on the word from one to another and to the Tucunas also. So the number who hear shall grow wide, though only two speak at first."

"It is well," I answered. "The young otters and their mothers must be kept safe, and the tongues of the Otter and the Jaguar need no help to speak the truth. Where does Lontra go first?"

"Down the river to the town where are more Passés than here. The canoe of the white men shall go with ours. Then the Otter will turn aside into the Ypihah Aku—Warm Creek—to a place where dwell others. Do you go straight to the great river?"

"We go on until we find the place of Black Hawk, though we know not where that is."

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Lontra nodded, his eyes on our rifles leaning against posts.

"The Otter does not know where Caracara-i can be found," he said, "but others may know."

And with that he stopped talking of Black Hawk and poured more *cauim*. We all drank again.

After that he began telling a tale of nearly being bitten by a snake. Jawuah followed with a story of killing with a spear a black jaguar which had sprung at him from a tree—and proved it by bringing in the hide of the creature and showing the spear-hole in it. Then Pedro, who had said hardly anything since we came, told of our experiences on the Creek of Death, describing them so well that all the Indians leaned forward with eyes wide.

Other tales followed as our tongues grew loose from the mild but mellow liquor. Even Senhor Tom told a story or two in the Tupi tongue, the Passés nodding gravely whenever he paused, and following his words with close-attention.

To them, buried so far back in the bush that they saw few even of their own people, it was a wonderful evening when three white men stayed among them and told of things elsewhere. If we had not grown sleepy I believe they would gladly have stayed awake all night to listen to us.

But at length we yawned so often that we had to stop talking. Then Lontra offered us his own house for the night. But we told him we would rather sleep where we were, in the open shed, with a fire beside us. So, though he protested that the hammocks there were old, and that some evil might come to us if we slept outside walls, that was what we did.

A fire was laid and lit and piled high with slow-burning wood. The women took the little nut-oil lamps and went to the huts. The silent brother and nephews of Lontra followed. Only the Otter and the Jaguar remained—and Merere, who looked often at Pedro.

"Pedro, take your little lady friend around the corner and kiss her good night," said Senhor Tom. "That's what she's waiting for."

"Perhaps I would, *senhor*," Pedro smiled, "But I think she is the Jaguar's girl, and I like the Jaguar."

"Brother and sister, you boob!"

"No. He is the chief's son, and she is daughter to the chief's brother, I think. Cousins."

But then, still smiling, he spoke to the girl, wishing her pleasant dreams and calling her *hereui*—sister. She laughed very prettily, making no answer with her lips—though her big dark eyes said much.

At once my comrade turned to Jawuah, wished him also peaceful rest, and called him *hereneh*—brother. The tall fellow, who had looked rather sober again, smiled slightly and strode away toward the houses, the girl following. Lontra looked after them with eyes twinkling. Then, with no more words, he left us.

"Neatly done, old chap," said the North American. "She's a lovable little thing, if you ask me. But we have serious business ahead and no time for flirtations. Besides, we need the Jaguar in our business. And I have to hand it to you, Lourenço, for thinking up this scheme of starting a backfire against Black Hawk. It may make a big difference in the end."

"Perhaps so, *senhor*," I said. "Or perhaps not. It was worth trying, so I tried it. And now, if that *cauim* is not all gone, let us have one more good gourdful and sleep."

The liquor was not all gone. We helped ourselves and lay down. And if any danger was near us in the night it did not disturb us. After my eyes closed I knew no more until day lay bright around us.

Then, with another hearty meal under our belts, we picked up our guns and said we were ready. For once we were not troubled by the talk of Itariapu, who was very quiet and often looked anxiously at her man, the chief.

Merere too lingered near us, unsmiling. Yet the girl seemed not so much concerned about her kinsman Jawuah as about Pedro's leaving, for she watched my comrade and gave the Jaguar hardly a glance.

As before, Jawuah gave little sign that he noticed this or cared. But Pedro, after looking from one to the other, muttered—

"I must say good-by to the maid—and see to it that she understands that it is good-by."

So, when we started for the canoe, he spoke to her.

"Farewell, little Arrow. We take with us our brother the Jaguar, but he will return soon to you. We do not return. A happy life to you, and a good man, and many handsome sons."

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For a long minute she stood looking steadily at him. Then she answered, speaking soft and low.

"*Camarah — ikuana Tupana cirum.* Friend—go with God."

When we reached the top of the bank and turned to look back before dropping into the ravine she still stood there beside the hammocks we had left, and somehow she looked lonely and wistful. And as we went down the path in the gully I pondered on the fact that she had used the old form of farewell taught by the Jesuit missionaries, and that instead of giving Pedro the usual name of *Cariwa* (white man) she had called him *camarah*—friend. It was plain that Jawuah had not gained by our visit.

But that could not be helped, and nothing was said. At the water's edge we three spent a little time arranging our supplies in a way that suited us better, the Otter and the Jaguar meanwhile waiting patiently. Then we got aboard and pushed out into the river.

In the middle of the sluggish stream the two Indians turned their eyes back toward their homes. Only the screen of riverside bush and the narrow mouth of the dry creek were in sight. But all at once their faces showed sudden dread.

Puzzled, we looked at them and at the ravine. Then, listening, we knew what caused their dismay. Thinly from the direction of the clearing sounded a whining wail.

It was not the weeping of a woman or the cry of a child. It was worse. Into the tiny town which we had left, another visitor now had come, and from some tree close beside the huts it was pouring out its weird plaint; the black bird *caracara-i*, herald of death.

VII

WHILE we listened to that bird of evil omen the current was carrying us away, and soon the sound died out behind us.

"Let us go back and kill that infernal thing," I said.

But Pedro felt otherwise.

"It would do little good," he objected. "The death-message still would stay in the minds of the Indians. Worse yet, if these two should go back the women would beg them not to leave again, and they might decide to stay there and defend the others against the death which they would expect to come, whether we shot the bird or not. Then your plan of sending the word among the other Indians would be dead, unless you found others to do it."

"What's more," added Senhor Tom, "we might not bag the cussed bird after all. It might fly off, or we might miss our shot. Then these chaps sure would think the Black Hawk had the better of us. Now that we've made a start, let's go."

With which he resumed paddling. We sank our own blades in the water. Lontra and Jawuah, though with troubled faces, pushed on down-stream with us.

"The Black Hawk is late," I said with a grin, trying to cheer them. "We were away and about our business before it woke up. Unless it shows more speed hereafter we shall soon have it hanging by the feet for the monkeys to jeer at."

But their faces remained solemn, and Lontra spoke the thing which I knew must be in his mind.

"The *caracara-i* spoke not to us but to those we leave behind. Death comes to the young otters."

"Death might come to them if the Otter did nothing to stop it, but already the Otter has gotten ahead of it," I retorted. "From the Black Hawk neither the Otter nor his people have anything to fear—it is too slow, and now it can only sit and whine because it knows its own death is not far off.

"Is not Lontra the head of his family? Does not every messenger, good or bad, talk to the head of the tribe? Of course. Then why did not the *caracara-i* speak before we left? Because it is a coward and a liar, and it waited until the Otter had left the land before it dared fly to the Otter's place and open its sniveling mouth. Death comes, yes. But it comes to the Black Hawk itself, and well the whining creature knows it."

This gave the Passé pair another side of the matter to think about, and though my argument was a poor one it seemed to comfort them. They still looked serious, but they stroked more heartily than before, and no more was said. Soon they pushed their canoe ahead of ours.

"Give them a race, comrades, and let them win," suggested Pedro. "It will take the trouble out of their minds."

Then to the Passés he added in Tupi—

"My brothers are strong paddlers, but we shall beat them to the next turn."

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Jawuah grinned slowly and heaved hard. Lontra at once took up the challenge. We made a great show of desperate efforts to pass them, and it was not all pretense; for the Passé pair were born canoemen and well muscled, and we had to let ourselves out in order to make it look like a race.

By the time we reached the bend both dugouts were flying, and the Indians were on edge with excitement. Then, having beaten us with plenty of room to spare, they laughed like a couple of big boys. For the time, at least, their dread of the Black Hawk was gone.

For some hours we journeyed on at good speed, cheering up the Indians with another race whenever they seemed to be growing too serious. Then they slowed and swung toward a creek-mouth on the west shore.

"Ypihah Aku," said the Otter. "Warm Creek."

Their canoe drifted easily down to the entrance, went on inland, and kept going. We followed. Unlike the dry ravine leading to the town of the Otter, this little valley held a good depth of gently flowing water, and the village of the Passés living there was farther from the river.

As we paddled on up the stream we could see and feel why it was called warm. It ran nearly straight east and west, the trees did not interlock overhead, and the sunlight fell into it all day; so the air and the water both were heated.

For perhaps half a mile we kept on before reaching the town. Nowhere along the stream did we see or hear any human life. And even when we reached the clearing where the village stood we heard no children shouting or other noise of a town. For a moment we thought some disaster might have fallen on the place.

But then, after climbing the bank and looking about, we saw that plenty of people were there, even though quiet. At an open shelter, like the one where we had slept last night, a crowd was gathered, listening to some talk going on inside. And when we walked over to join the crowd we found that other visitors had arrived before us.

The Passés, with words of greeting to the Otter and the Jaguar and friendly smiles at us, opened a way into the center of their circle. There we found an old, very thin Passé who seemed to be chief, and five Indians who certainly were not Passés. After one glance at them Senhor Tom grunted.

"Tucunas," he said.

Pedro and I looked with interest at the men of the tribe backing Black Hawk. They were not so much unlike the Passés as we had expected. Indeed, they resembled the Passés much more than the usual Indian type; for their skins were rather light, their mouths small, their lips thin and noses high. But they were thicker of body than the slim Passés, they lacked the dignity of Jawuah and Lontra, and their face-tattooing was much different; a number of straight lines instead of a square patch.

More important to us than these bodily differences, however, was the variance in their expressions and manners. They looked sullen, and instead of the friendly smiles and murmured greetings of the Warm Creek people, they gave us cold, slow stares. Yet their gaze was not hostile, even when they looked into the blue eyes of the North American.

"For once I do not know whether I am among friends or enemies," Pedro said, studying those five faces. "They might be either."

"Exactly," nodded Senhor Tom. "It runs in the Tucuna blood. They're not so loyal as most Indians. Mostly they're friendly enough toward whites, but they can change color without much difficulty."

"So much the better for us," I pointed out. "If they can turn against us they can also turn against Black Hawk."

Then the Otter began talking to the thin chief of Warm Creek, and all listened intently. Without any waste of words he told that we came into this country to learn more of Black Hawk; that we said the Hawk was a liar and those who followed him were fools; that the white men outside wished no harm to Passés or Tucunas, did not intend to make slaves of them as Caracara-i said, and would not trouble them in any way unless forced to; but that if the men of this jungle made war on them they would come with many guns and sweep the land from end to end.

"The Passés and the white men always have been friends," he went on. "Never has war come between us. Many of the daughters of the Passés have blended their blood with that of the whites, and many of the whites who now live along the great

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river carry in their hearts the blood of the Passés. Now at the last, when the Passé nation fades into the grave, the brotherhood of Passé and white shall still hold strong and true. Uituh Aku—Warm Wind—has the Otter spoken well?"

"Well!" agreed Warm Wind.

And from all the Passés round about us sounded hearty approval. But the Tucunas said no word.

"Do the whites ask our help?" Warm Wind added.

Before Lontra could answer Senhor Tom spoke up.

"The whites ask no help. We can fight our own fight, if fighting must be. We ask only that the Passés carry the words of truth to one another and give no aid to that evil Black Hawk who feasts on women."

A rumble went around. Old Warm Wind answered:

"We give no aid to that one. The white man need not have asked."

"Warm Wind speaks truly," I broke in. "We know the hands of our brothers the Passés never will be lifted against us. Yet here are Tucunas. We hear that the Tucunas are men of Black Hawk. Why are the men of the Hawk in the town of our friends?"

The old chief let the Tucunas make their own reply. One of them, more muscular than the others, looked me boldly in the face as he spoke.

"We are no men of Black Hawk. We are no men of the whites. We are our own masters. We visit our friends the Passés."

"It is well," I answered. "We are glad to find Tucunas too wise to follow Caracara-i. Why do other Tucunas believe the lies of that creature and support him?"

"How do we know they are lies?" he retorted. "The Tucunas have known white men who spoke with a split tongue. They have known whites who robbed the men of the forest. How do we know you speak truth?"

Again Senhor Tom spoke first. He stepped forward, his face hard, his eyes gleaming, his blond beard bristling, his voice fierce.

"Take care, Tucuna! Say that again and I will twist your nose! I am Tupahn! Tupahn, who journeyed on the Jutahy and knows the Tucunas well. Did any Tucuna ever say Tupahn spoke lies?"

The bold-eyed Tucuna flinched under the American's glare. His mates glanced at one another as if the name Tupahn meant something to them. To me and to the Passés it meant only "thunder-storm," for that word is part of the Tupi language. But the five visitors now looked at him with respect.

"We have heard of Tupahn," one of them said. "No man has said the Thunder-storm talks falsely."

"And no man will be wise to say so," Senhor Tom declared, his voice booming now like the thunder whose name he carried. "I, Tupahn, say to you that the words you have heard from the Otter are truth. I say to you that the Tucunas who follow Black Hawk bring death on themselves.

"And not only on themselves but on you and on all other Tucunas. When a great army of my white comrades pours in here with guns and knives, how shall they know who has been friend or foe? They can not know. So they will punish all."

The five looked at one another again, uneasily this time.

"There is yet time for the Tucunas to save themselves," the blond man went on. "Let them leave the Hawk and go to their homes and drink and dance in safety. Was there war and murder and girl-ruin here before Black Hawk poured his lies into the ears of the Tucunas? No. And there will be none after the Tucunas leave him. We white men will attend to him. The Tucunas will be at peace as before.

"Go tell your brothers the truth, and you save their lives and your own. Then the great white chiefs who live at the end of the great river shall hear that the Tucunas still are their friends, and so they will not turn the guns upon them. I, Tupahn, will tell them."

Once more the five looked around them; looked at us, at Lontra and Jawuah, at Warm Wind and the people of the Warm Creek. They muttered among themselves, glancing up now and then at Senhor Tom. And more than once we caught the words—

"Tupahn tells truth."

At length they nodded in agreement. The one who had done most of the talking spoke up in a tone of decision.

"We believe the words of Tupahn. It is true that the young women of the Tucunas were safe until Caracara-i came among us, and that now they are not safe. That is why we who are here have not followed that

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man. There are others like us. The Tucunas want peace and pleasure, not war. If Tupahn will tell the great white chiefs we still are friends, we shall talk to our brothers."

"Tupahn has spoken. What Tupahn says he will do, that he does. Now if our brother Warm Wind has *cauim*, let us drink to the peace and pleasure of the Passés and the Tucunas."

The eyes of the Tucunas glowed at the word *cauim*, and they glowed still more when the red drink came by the gourdful. But we did not purpose to spend the day there in drinking. So, after the Otter and the Jaguar and Warm Wind had talked among themselves for a while, we three told the rest we now would go on toward Black Hawk's roost, and asked whether any one went down-stream with us.

The Tucunas said nothing and looked thirsty. But when Warm Wind said that eight men from his town would start at once to spread the word, and Lontra and Jawuah added that they would go with us some hours farther, the visitors saw that the chance of an all-day drinking match was gone. So they said they would go with us to a side-stream where they would find other Tucunas. And soon we turned our backs on the Warm Creek people, and paddled away toward the river, leaving behind us eight men preparing to travel the bush, and followed by the canoes of the Otter and the Tucunas.

At the mouth of the sunlit stream we paused and asked the Tucunas where the Hawk now was. They said he was somewhere lower down the river. Then we asked where his usual camp was, and were told they did not know, except that it was not many days away from Viciado. They never had been there, they said. This convinced us that they told truth when they said they were not men of Caracara-i. So we asked about only one more matter.

"What has become of the white man and the white girl who were caught at Viciado?" I demanded.

"The man is dead."

"Dead? How?"

"Killed."

"And the girl?"

"No man knows."

"Black Hawk had her?"

"So we have heard."

"And she now is gone?"

"Gone."

We shoved away down-stream.

VIII

FOR a while we paddled in silence. As before, the two Passés led the way. We made no more show of racing with them, but swung along at our usual cruising speed. Behind us came the two canoes of the Tucunas.

"Senhor Thunder-storm, how did you earn your name?" Pedro asked after a time.

The blond man, who had been plying his blade with an angry sort of punch, lifted his head as if bringing his thoughts back from some other place.

"Oh, by roaring at a Tucuna gang I had for a while. Tucunas mostly are slow movers, except when a boozing bout is on. Then they're fast workers. So when I wanted to throw a little pep into them I'd start rip-roaring around until I had them on the hop.

"The way to handle Tucunas is to treat 'em rough—only not too rough. Bawl 'em out, but don't give them the boot. Notice how quick they began to pull in their horns after I let loose my stand-out-from-under voice? Maybe you thought they were scared, but it wasn't that exactly. They just woke up to the fact that there was a boss in the place."

"Yet it was not your voice alone that moved them. They had heard other things of you."

"Oh well, I always treated my men square, of course. Paid them well and kept my word. An Indian might forgive you for killing his brother or swiping his squaw, but never for breaking your promise. And besides, I saved one chap's life after he got snake-bitten, and they appreciate little things like that. Looks as if my square-deal policy might pay dividends now."

"It is as you say, *senhor*," I agreed. "An Indian has a long memory. These Tucunas told truth when they said some white men lied and robbed them, for more than one *aviador*—roving trader—is a sneaking cheat. So if you had not been known here as honest we now should lack at least five of the fifteen men who are working for us. And these five are the most important."

"They are unless somebody side-tracks them with a jug of rum. But before we

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part I'll try to impress them again with the seriousness of matters. We need all the missionaries we can get, and then some."

Remembering the eagerness of the Tucunas to drink Warm Wind's liquor, and their slowness in leaving it, I could easily believe that they might tarry in any place where drink was free. But, drunk or sober, they would not be likely to forget to talk about us, and the word we gave them would spread as any news always does among Indians—slowly, perhaps, but steadily, as ripples on water go on and on until they reach the farthest shore.

And, thinking of this, I thought also of another thing; that now we had started the message to traveling, we must give it time to travel. So I spoke my thought to Senhor Tom and Pedro.

The North American scowled, but slowly nodded.

"You're right, I suppose," he admitted. "If we outrun our back-fire it won't do us much good. But, dang it——"

He broke off and chewed his mustache.

"I understand, *senhor*," I said. "You want to drive ahead and close with the Hawk before he does more harm. And you feel that by haste we might help that white girl in some way. But I fear we come far too late to do her any good. It has been some time since she and her father were caught, and whatever has happened to her is now over; she has disappeared, and no doubt she is dead.

"And since all the Amazon boats now avoid Viciado, there is little chance that any other whites will fall into the clutches of Caracara-i for some time to come. So neither we nor any one else will gain by our rushing ahead in impatience."

"Unless Black Hawk himself gains by it," added Pedro. "And that is not what we desire."

Senhor Tom paddled on for a few minutes before replying.

"Yes, you're right," he conceded then. "I'm in too much of a hurry. Usually am. Patience isn't my long suit. You fellows are the bosses on this expedition anyhow, so run the show your own way. What'll we do? Lie up somewhere while our word travels?"

"Not at all," I dissented. "We can not depend too much on the value of our message to the Tucunas, and we must do our own work. But we have almost forgotten our orders. We have grown to feel that we are here to hunt down this Black Hawk and kill him. The *coronel's* instructions were only to learn all we could, and not, as he said, to 'get ourselves into a fine fight.'

"So let us try first to find the camp of the *cafuzo*, scout around it, and find out all we can about it and about him. If we can smash him before we leave, so much the better. But our first duty is to get information that will help our *coronel* and carry it out to him."

"In other words, keep out of the hawk's claws until we can clip his wings for good," the blond man agreed. "That's sense. A scouting expedition has to watch its step if it's going to deliver the goods. All the same, here's hoping for a good crack at that black stinker."

To this we grunted agreement. Then we gave all our attention to paddling and watching the shores and the stream ahead.

A couple of hours later our Passé friends left us. At a place where a long point ran out into the river they said they now would go inland to talk with another tribe of their own people whose creek had dried up like their own; and from there they would make visits to other villages until they were sure the word had been carried to all the Passés and to neighboring Tucunas as well. So we paddled with them to the point, and said farewell.

"Always, Cariwa, the hand of the Passés is joined with the hand of the white man," said the Otter, standing straight and dignified at the edge of the water, and speaking to Senhor Tom.

"The great white chiefs shall hear the words of the Otter," the blond man promised. "And when the Otter has gone to his fathers the white man will be the friend of the Jaguar and the Arrow and the others of the Otter people. Go with God."

"*Ikuana Tupana cirum*," the Jaguar answered, his eyes on Pedro. Then, as we moved on, they turned their faces to the forest.

For another hour or two the Tucunas trailed silently behind. At length they drove their canoes up to ours, and the man who had done the talking pointed to a knoll on the left bank, on which a giant *massaranduba* tree towered high above the rest of the forest growth.

"Tupahn, we go," he said.

Senhor Tom nodded, and we swung over

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toward the knoll, thinking an Indian village might be on it. But none was there. Instead, an inlet of water opened below the knoll, and into this the Tucuna dugouts turned.

The muscular spokesman said the inlet became a curving lagoon, at the farther end of which was a Tucuna town. He did not ask us to go to that town, and we did not care about visiting the place, as the sun now was sinking and we would rather sleep in a secret camp of our own. So there the five left us.

Before they went, however, Senhor Tom talked solemnly to them, declaring once more that unless the Tucunas came to their senses and deserted Caracara-i a terrible punishment would come upon them.

He also told them we had no time to go about warning all the Tucunas—we had other work to do; so it rested with them to spread the message, and if they failed theirs would be the blame for the deaths of many men later on. They made no answer, gave no word or other sign. But there was no doubt that they were impressed. Their faces and eyes showed that.

With no word of farewell they pushed their boats away and faded from sight around a turn in the channel. We squinted at the sun, dug our paddles in deep, and sped away down the Jundiatyba seeking a good camping-place.

Once more our canoe was alone on the river, driving on toward the Hawk's foul nest. The bush on both sides looked as empty of human life as before. But now in that bush men were moving out to east and west, carrying along hidden creek and dry ravine a message that would creep onward until it reached the ears of every jungle-man between the Javary and the Jutahy.

When we had found a snug little port and were resting in our hammocks under a palm-leaf *tambo*, Senhor Tom chuckled.

"Funny, when you come to think of it," he said. "Here we three chaps come breezing in here bold as brass, and start to knock the props out from under the jungle emperor before he gets his throne well warmed up. I don't know how big a following he's got, but it must be big enough to gobble us at one bite if it caught us. And yet, without even pulling a gun, we've begun to eat up his army. All done by spilling a few words in the right place."

"Yet that is how he got his army, *senhor*," said Pedro. "By words—lying words—he has drawn the Tucunas around him. After all, it is only the old fight between truth and falsehood. And truth always wins."

"In the end, yes. But a lie always gets off to a flying start, and sometimes it takes the truth an awful while to catch up. All the same, we've given old Lady Truth a pretty good getaway. Yesterday noon nobody around these parts would give her a boost, and now she's riding around on the tongues of at least fifteen men. By tomorrow night the number will be doubled. And if it doubles every day for two weeks it'll be—let's see, now."

He dug a pencil and a small note-book out of a shirt-pocket and went to work. In a few minutes he whistled.

"More than a hundred and twenty thousand! Judas, that's impossible, even if the figures do say so. Anyway, a lot of folks in this neck of the woods will be doing some tall thinking within a fortnight. Lourenço, you sure have started something. I hope all the people who are going to be worried over your talk to the Passés won't walk over your chest in dreams tonight. If they do you'll be trampled flat before morning."

I grinned, yawned, and said no dreams would trouble me. Yet after I slept I did dream. The things that passed through my mind that night were not such as Senhor Tom had joked about, but they made me awake in the darkness and wonder over them before sleeping again.

In that dream I walked through a dim forest of great trees until I came to slow-moving black water across which no fallen tree or other bridge lay. Up along the shore of this I went until the wide rounded trough of the stream pinched together into two steep hills, between which the creek flowed out through a narrow ravine. As I stood looking at it, from some place beyond sounded the whining cry of the black hawk *caracara-i*.

I hated that sound, and I climbed one of the hills and went on, hunting for the odious bird. Then I found myself in an open space, and there I saw two living things; a shriveled old woman, and, high overhead, a monstrous black hawk.

The hawk was not perched in a tree-top as usual, but sweeping around far up in the air, pouring out its wretched call as it wheeled, and watching the ground. The

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old woman looked up at it and shook her skinny hands in rage. And as I watched she began to scream:

"Come here and I will burn you! Come down and I will burn you!"

But the hawk did not come down. It kept on sweeping around. And it was so huge that though it was far above I could see its claws working as it flew, opening and closing like the fists of a man furious but afraid.

Then while I stood there like a fool, forgetting that I had a gun, another thing came floating and flitting across the open space—a great butterfly.

It was one of those splendid big insects, with glossy wings of dark blue and purple, which one often sees here on the upper Amazon; but it was much larger than any I ever had seen, and its wide wings flashed in the sunlight like gleams of blue fire. It swung around me a few times and then came to rest on my shoulder.

And as I looked up again at the hawk a voice spoke in my ear—a voice low but tuneful and vibrant as the strings of a guitar.

"Kill the hawk!" it said. "Kill quickly, or it will tear you apart!"

I turned my head to look at the talking butterfly, and saw that now it had the face of a beautiful girl with eyes so darkly blue that they seemed almost black. Before I could notice more, the red lips moved and the voice came again, quick and urgent.

"The hawk comes! Shoot!"

It was true. The huge hawk was swooping toward me. I threw up my gun and shot swift and straight. The bird swerved, screeched, then went flapping crazily away. And then all at once the place became full of peccaries—grunting, squealing animals which clashed their teeth and rushed around as if seeking something to rip to death. And the beasts had the faces of Tucunas.

The girl-butterfly darted out over the heads of the jungle pigs and disappeared. The old woman shrieked, the hawk's whining wail became a piercing whistle, and somewhere in the bush near me the shouts and shots of battling men broke out.

THEN all at once the whole scene blurred and faded. I found myself in my hammock.

Around me was the peace of a moonlit night. Somewhere far out in the forest a *guariba* monkey was howling at the moon, and beside me both my comrades were gently snoring, Pedro with soft gurgles and Senhor Tom with a tiny whistling noise. Outside our little *tambo* the deep shadows were splashed with silvery light, and among them moved nothing dangerous.

For some time I lay looking out, enjoying the damp coolness and thinking about what I had just heard and seen in my sleep. Then I told myself that it all came from hearing the night noises of the bush and the sounds of sleeping men. So I changed my position, closed my eyes, and soon drifted away again into rest.

But the time was not far off when I was to think more of that dream.

IX

FOR days after that we cruised on toward the Amazon. In those days we met no danger except a couple of sudden thunder-squalls which lashed the river into waves that gave us hard paddling to avoid upset. Of animals we saw little, and of men nothing at all.

Yet, though we spied no men, we knew well that we probably were seen. There are always eyes in the bush, and any wandering hunter or fisherman along either shore could not have failed to observe our canoe sliding down the water. But since nobody menaced us, we gave little attention to the creek-mouths which we passed each day.

On the morning after my queer dream I told my comrades of it. Senhor Tom laughed and advised me to plug my ears before going to sleep, and I threatened to put a split stick on his nose to stop his whistling snore.

But Pedro, though he too laughed, showed much interest in my story and asked many questions about it. And when I had told him everything I could remember he drank more coffee in an absent way and then sat puffing his cigaret as thoughtfully as if I had really seen those things instead of imagining them.

"Come out of it, Pedro!" Senhor Tom jeered. "Don't sit there in a clairvoyant trance. You don't believe in dreams, do you? That's old-woman stuff."

"Perhaps so, *senhor*," my partner said coolly. "Most dreams are foolishness. Yet I have known of dreams which meant

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something, and this one of Lourenço's is strange enough to be worth thinking about. That butterfly of yours, Lourenço—was her face that of an Indian girl or a white?"

"White," I told him. "I can not remember it well now, but it was not the face of any one I ever saw. It was not that of Merere, if that is what you mean."

He grinned, and Senhor Tom snickered. Then the American made more fun of him.

"If you're a dream-reader, translate this one. I had a most gosh-awful dream last night. I was a monkey, away up in a high tree, hanging off a branch by my tail and making faces at you down on the ground. After a while I got tired of it and tried to get hold of the branch with my hind paws, but I couldn't make it.

"While I was scrambling around, my tail broke plumb off—made a noise just like a man tearing his pants, too—and I fell about three miles and landed kerplunk in the mud. Then I woke up and found I had rolled out of my hammock. Now what do you make of that?"

"That is easy, Senhor Tom," Pedro told him. "It means: Do not make a monkey of yourself."

The blond man blinked. Then he laughed.

"You win," he said. "I won't make any more faces at you. Come on, let's go."

And we left the camp for another day of paddling.

In the next few days Pedro spoke several times of that dream of mine, and Senhor Tom made fun of both of us. Then we said no more of it, for new work came up in our journey toward Black Hawk's lair. For the first time we learned how to reach the place we sought.

It was an old Tucuna who told us. Rounding a bend in the river, we saw him and a couple of small boys in a canoe moving slowly along in shallow water near shore, spearing fish. The two boys were using the paddles, while the old man stood at the bow with weapon ready.

Just as we came into sight he stabbed a good-sized fish and threw it into the dugout, and for a few minutes the three were so intent on their catch that they did not notice us. One of the boys spied us then, and the old man turned with the spear held as if he meant to throw it. But after a look at us he lowered it.

"Good day, *heramuhm*—grandfather," I greeted him. "Your spear is strong and your eye keen, but you do not need the spear for us. We are friends."

He looked at me so long that I thought he would not answer. But then he spoke, calling me *auah uhnyah*—young man—and asking where I journeyed.

"Where should any man journey on a stream flowing into the great river?" I asked in return.

He thought this over, and then said we were in a bad country for white men. If we would reach the great river safely, he told us, we must hasten and beware of all whom we met. If Caracara-i caught us we should die.

From his way of speaking we could see he had no hostility toward us and no love for Black Hawk. So I said we had no fear of the evil *cafuzo*, and that before long there would be no Black Hawk here. He asked what I meant.

"We white men are tired of Black Hawk's actions," I declared. "He has lived too long. He is a liar and a woman-destroyer. We hear that even the Tucunas, who once were our friends but now help our enemy, must hide their daughters from him. If the Tucunas were the men we have always thought them they would make an end of him. But since they will not, we must do it.

"You know the way of the white man, *heramuhm*—slow to move sometimes, but deadly in war. Soon we shall strike to kill. I hope your young men are not with that vile creature. If so, they die with him. Have you not heard the word which now travels the bush—that the Tucunas must leave Caracara-i if they would save their lives?"

In his deliberate way he let my talk sink into his mind before replying. He said then that he had heard no word. I told him that soon he would hear it, and from the mouths of his own people. He looked at me with troubled gaze, then stared down the river.

"The young men are fools and will not listen to their elders," he said after a while. "I, who have been out on the great river and worked for the whites before I grew old and slow, have told our young men that we must lift no hand against them.

"But the black man has put a spell on them and made their ears deaf to sense. In my village now are no young men. All are

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with Caracara-i. My heart is heavy for them. It would grow light again if that black one died before the white guns came here."

"The white guns are here now," I replied, lifting my rifle. "They do not seek the lives of the Tucunas. But our grandfather's heart might grow light even as he says, if these guns could find the Hawk's nest."

His eyes fixed on my big-bored weapon, and in them came a hard gleam.

"If the guns would find that nest let them go on until the sun once more stands in the middle of the sky," he told us. "Then let them go into an *ygarapé* on the right hand where stands a twisted *mandiroba* tree. Two days more toward the place where the sun comes up will bring them to slow black water crawling from the north. Up the black water is the place where Caracara-i sleeps."

"We shall remember," I promised. "And when we go out we shall tell our comrades that the young men of the Tucunas are held by the evil eye of the Hawk, and when that eye is shut they will again be friends of the white man. Perhaps that eye will shut before we reach the great river."

With that we passed on, leaving him staring solemnly after us.

"Tomorrow noon turn east into a creek marked by a twisted tree," Senhor Tom repeated. "Then two days east, up a black stream from the north— Hm! Must be hills in there, or the black water would run to the Amazon. Let's see."

He laid down his paddle and dug into his map-case. After a silent study of some papers he went on:

"Creek opens off this river about where he said. No hills shown there, though, and neither is the black-water stream. But we'll find them if they exist. Looks as if we were closing in on our *cafuzo*."

The next noon we found the twisted *mandiroba* on the east shore. Beside it opened the *ygarapé* of which the old Tucuna had told. And into this we went, alert for any sign of foes.

Yet we traveled on eastward until sundown without meeting any man. Around us only the usual noises of the bush sounded, and nowhere along the sloping shores could we see even the mark of a human foot or of a canoe-bow. Nor did anything disturb our rest that night.

On the following day we traveled onward in the same way and with the same result. The *ygarapé* wound along for mile after mile, broadened into a long weedy lagoon, narrowed again, and continued on as before. Over it hung the same feeling of loneliness, on its banks was the same lack of human signs.

Here and there along the way other streams flowed into it, and some were of dark water; but not one of them was large enough to make a by-path for canoes. We made our camp that night up one of those brooks which was wide enough to float our dugout, and well screened by undergrowth. When we had eaten we looked at one another with the same thought in our minds.

"It's all wrong," said Senhor Tom. "We're supposed to be closing in on a young army, but there's no trace. This place not only looks empty—it feels empty. No sign of anything or anybody. I suspect that old fisherman was an angel-faced liar, sending us off here on a wild-goose chase. Why? To get us bottled up, maybe, and then nail us from behind. What do you think?"

"I can hardly believe that," I disagreed. "I think he spoke the truth. When he said 'two days more' he must have meant two full days, from noon to noon. That would not bring us to the black-water stream until tomorrow noon. Yet I do not understand why we have seen no sign that men use this waterway."

"Nor I," Pedro admitted. "But I feel that we are on the right trail. Something tells me that tomorrow we shall find something beyond here."

"If we don't I'm going all the way back to give that old son-of-a-gun an earful," growled the blond man. "And I'll make him cough up the straight dope or wring his skinny neck. Meanwhile let's put our dreamers to work. Lourenço, see if you can't have a good one tonight. And if your butterfly lady lights on your shoulder again, grab her and hold her until you wake up. I'd like to see her."

But my butterfly girl did not visit any of us that night, nor any other dream. In the morning we ate in silence and moved on with a feeling that somehow we had gone astray since leaving the river.

This feeling, however, quickly left us. Only a little way beyond our hiding-place we spied what we had been looking for all the time; an old camp. Marks of canoes and many feet showed on the left bank, partly washed out by rains; and up at the

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top the bush was beaten down and cut away. We did not go up to inspect the place, for the blurred tracks in the clay showed that some time had passed since the men had stayed there. Now that we knew this creek had been used by a large body of men, we pushed on carefully.

Noon passed, and still we had not found the black water nor any more sign. But we had moved slowly, and so we felt quite sure the stream from the north was beyond us. This proved true. About two hours later Pedro hissed softly and pointed ahead with his paddle. A few more quiet strokes brought us to the mouth of black water flowing sluggishly id from the left.

There we hung in the *ygarapé* a little while, squinting up the shadowy lane and listening. Nothing moved, no sound came. We turned and went up the dark water toward Black Hawk's abode.

Sunset was near again when we checked our paddles. Just ahead of us the light was much brighter, and we knew an opening in the trees was there. Very slowly we worked around one more turn. Then the quiet stream widened, and we looked down a good-sized lake.

The lake lay in a bowl of hills. On its west side, perhaps half a mile away, smoke rose from the top of a hill higher than the others. Its sides were steep and so thinly wooded that we knew it had been cleared of all bush by fire and steel. But of the men on its top we could see nothing, for the heads of the trees still standing on the slopes hid them from us. We could judge their number only by the size of the smoke and the number of canoes floating at the base of the hill.

"Hm!" muttered Senhor Tom. "Where's all that big army? If there are more than enough to make three squads up there I'm cock-eyed. Only a handful of canoes in sight, and only enough fire to cook grub for twenty men."

We looked around at the other hills, but saw no more smoke. Nor did we find any more boats. Except for that one place the lake seemed deserted. Then Pedro guessed what we soon learned was the truth.

"We have found the Hawk's nest, but not the Hawk himself. He is away."

X

NIGHT came before we moved.

We could not go back and camp in a cove or up some side stream, as usual, because on that last stretch we had seen no break in the steep banks for an hour or more before reaching the lake; and of course we did not wish to make any marks on the clay slopes themselves to show we had been there.

Nor could we push out into the lake until darkness hid us from any eye on that hill. So we stayed where we were, screened behind thin undergrowth, until the sun dropped from sight. Meanwhile we studied the whole lake.

"There seems to be a narrow *enseada* down on the east shore," Pedro pointed out. "No doubt we can find a good spot there for our hammocks. And since we can make no fire tonight, we may as well eat now while we wait."

So, keeping watch both ahead and behind, we made a meal from our salt fish and *chibeh*, and even smoked our usual cigarets—though we did not throw our butts away after smoking; we touched the coals to the water and dropped the dead stubs into our pockets, to keep until we could tread them into the mud where they would never be seen.

By the time we had finished with them the sun was touching the edge of the western hills, and soon afterward we were creeping out on a lake of darkness.

After some slow paddling we floated into the narrow bay Pedro had picked, and down this we journeyed until we began to wonder where it would end. We could see very little around us, for the gloom was thick. Up on the shores it was so black that we decided to wait for moonrise before trying to find a place to sleep. We had not long to wait, and when the moon did sail up we changed our minds about staying there.

The bay was more than a bay; it was another creek. By the new light we saw that we were almost at the end of the *enseada* itself, but that from its tip the new creek stretched on eastward, wider and probably deeper than the one up which we had come. While we studied it Senhor Tom made a suggestion.

"Say, fellows," he said softly, "why not spend another hour or two cruising alongshore on the lake and getting the lay of the

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land? Keep away from the inhabited hill for tonight, but find out what's what elsewhere. This place doesn't look very good for a camp anyhow."

So we turned and went back, hugging the shore. Before reaching the lake we met a thing that made our trigger-fingers itch.

It was a jaguar drinking at the water's edge. We were very near before Pedro saw it and backed water. The creature lifted its head with a fierce snarl, and by the size of its blazing eyes we knew it must be a powerful animal. For a few seconds I thought it would jump at us. But, though it growled and we could hear its tail switch about in the leaves, it did not leap. Quietly we backed until out of reach.

"You old son-of-a-gun!" Senhor Tom muttered. "I'd give a dollar to slam a soft-nose right between those yellow moons of yours. But we're after bigger game than bush-cats. Go chase your tail!"

The jungle king did not understand him, of course, but after another minute of growling it hushed, and its eyes vanished. We made an outward loop before returning to the shore-line, and we saw the great cat no more.

"Perhaps it was as well that we did not land there in the dark," Pedro remarked. "There might have been some noise."

Then we rounded the point into the lake.

Still keeping close to land, we roved along to the other end of the open water. Two short coves dented the shore-line, and we found that one of these curved around so that its end could not be seen from the outside. This we picked for our sleeping-spot. But we did not stop there then.

We kept on until we found at the north end a third creek, larger than either of the other two. There we halted, for the hill where the canoes lay was not far from us, and from it came noises that showed the men there were awake. Indeed, the shouts up there sounded as if all were getting drunk.

Back along the shore we traveled and around to the end of the curving cove. There we found firm ground and places to hang our nets. And there we smoked again and talked in low tones.

"Easy enough now to see why we found so little sign along our way in here," said Senhor Tom. "We came in by the back door. These other two creeks are bigger and better, and one runs north—toward Viciado, most likely—and the other east toward more thickly settled country. So they're used and the back way isn't, except by men coming in from up the Jundiatyba. The old boy up-stream told us the quickest route, and I hereby apologize to him for threatening to wring his neck."

"He has served us well," I agreed. "But now I would give much to know where Black Hawk is and when he will return."

"He is not expected to come back at once," said Pedro, "or those men on the hill would not be holding a drunken revel tonight. Now would be a good time for us to go and spy on their camp."

"Tomorrow would be better," I objected. "We can see much better by day. And I am tired."

"Me too," yawned Senhor Tom. "I'm going to pound my ear right now. See you in the morning, gents."

And he lay back and slept. So did we.

Darkness was still around us when Pedro's hand on my arm woke me. But it was the darkness just before dawn, and the noise of birds to the east told me that above the trees the light was coming.

"Let us move," said Pedro. "We ought to scout around that hill, and if we are to do it we must cross to the other shore before the mists rise. After that we can not move the canoe without being seen. Come."

"I am going to have some hot coffee first," I told him. "There will be plenty of time. That gang on the hill will sleep off the liquor before they can see anything."

So we made a small fire and had a hot breakfast—the last warm meal we were to have for some time to come. By the time it was finished the light was strong, but the morning fog still hung heavy on the water. We could see nothing a canoe-length away, but we knew just where the hill stood, and in our first careful study of the lake we had noted that between that hill and the small southern creek was a little bay. We planned to strike this and to hide our canoe there.

While Pedro and I were putting the hammocks into the boat, we heard a sharp click. As we turned toward Senhor Tom we found him sheathing his revolver. An instant later he snatched it out again, pulled trigger at a tree-trunk, jammed it back into the holster. Several times he did this. And he never moved the gun farther than his hip.

"Just practising hip-shot," he explained when we asked him what he was trying to

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do. "Gun's rusty, and so's my draw. Got to limber them both up. Might want to work fast sometime soon."

"Can you hit anything with your hand at your side?" I doubted.

"Can I? Well, here goes your right eye."

The weapon jumped from his leg again. It did not click this time, but I dodged. The big muzzle was looking me in the face.

"I believe you," I said. "Point it somewhere else."

He chuckled, swung out the cylinder, reloaded it, snapped it shut and holstered it.

"I'm slow on the draw, though," he grumbled. "Got to pick up speed. If I couldn't do any better than that in some places up home—the Big Bend in Texas, for one—I'd be dead six times before I got the gun out. Those boys shoot from both hips and the collar."

To us his speed in drawing the weapon seemed unbeatable, but he still worked his fingers as if they were lame. And when he picked up his paddle he scowled at it.

"That's what does it," he complained. "Hooking your hands around a paddle all day leaves your muscles stiff. Hereafter Mister Mack gives his hands a little set-up work twice a day. Not that a fifth of a second is likely to matter much down here, but you never can tell. Many a man has died because the other fellow shaded him by a hair."

"And many a man has delayed too long in starting a journey," Pedro reminded both of us. "The fog will lift soon. If we are to cross this lake today——"

"Right! Let's go."

And we shoved away to the mouth of the inlet.

We moved none too soon. Before we were half-way across the lake the mists moved and grew streaky, and we put more power into our strokes to reach the other side in time. When we slipped into the small bay the sun had thinned the fog to a haze which would not have hidden even a bird. And while we looked around us for a spot where we could conceal the canoe the haze vanished and broad day lit up the water.

The banks of the bay were too steep to give our dugout any hiding-place, but at the farther end a small stream came in from a gently curving hollow between sloping hills. It was wide enough to give us good passage, and well screened by small drooping palms. We slid into it and found ourselves once more in gloom.

"So far, so good," said Senhor Tom. "Plenty of streams in and out of this lake. This one shows no sign of use either. Now to find a crack for the boat to lie in."

We soon found one—a tiny arm of water under the palms—and pushed into it. Then, leaving everything but our weapons, we began threading the bush toward the stronghold of the man who ruled this jungle.

As we went we noticed that this part of the forest was little trodden. Though the Hawk's hill was hardly more than a good gunshot away, and though many men must be there at times, we found hardly a human footprint in the cool depths of the virgin jungle through which we passed. The ground was a succession of knolls, all heavily timbered but not thick with undergrowth, between which ran clear, cold little brooks.

Here and there the sunlight fell hot through the branches, and in these warm spots bright butterflies fluttered about in pretty play. A man passing through that place without knowing of the sinister hill ahead would never suspect that danger was near.

But if he had walked with us that morning he would have realized the danger with sickening suddenness. For as we came out of that peaceful forest and looked up the side of the cleared hill, we stumbled over human bones.

They lay scattered around just as the vultures had left them, and among them we counted three skulls. They had been there for some time; some were partly covered by dry mud, and the rest were spattered with dirt splashed on them by rains. It was easy to see that the three bodies had been rolled and kicked down the slope as the easiest way to get them out of the camp. And I much doubted that they had been Indians.

"Do the Tucunas bury their dead?" I whispered.

The explorer nodded and whispered back:

"Chiefs are buried in big clay jars under their houses. Don't know whether common men get jars too, but I think they do. Anyway, they're buried."

After a searching look along the slope we gazed down again at the bones. Pedro pointed at a leg-bone, then at an arm-bone; then at another leg-bone. All had been

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broken. And as we glanced at others we found more broken ones.

"A slow death," he said. "Comrades, those men were broken up *pouco a pouco*—bit by bit. Your hawk is a cruel bird."

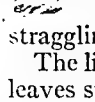
Our blond companion growled and his blue eyes glittered. Looking at him, I left unsaid the thing that came into my mind—that those bones might be those of women, not men. Neither did I think it well to speak of the Englishman and his daughter.

The thing I did say was that we could do nobody any good by standing there, and that we had best move on at once. Even as I muttered this there came to our nostrils a faint odor of wood-smoke, telling us that some of the men above us were awake and cooking breakfast.

We had reached the hill at a place well back from the water, and on the slope before us no path was visible from where we stood. The trees still growing on the hillside were few and too widely scattered to give any real cover, but we began crawling upward without seeking a place where the concealment might be better. From tree to tree we worked, pausing behind each butt to watch and listen, until we had mounted to the upper edge.

There, hugging a charred stump big enough to hide all three of us, we gazed upon the camp of Black Hawk.

XI



BEFORE us stretched a long, fairly wide plateau on which stood a few huge trees, many stumps, and a straggling array of small huts.

The little shelters were only roofs of palm-leaves supported by poles or by the stumps left after clearing the ground, and they showed no orderly arrangement, seeming to stand wherever each builder happened to feel like putting up his roof. Most of these, as we could easily see, were empty.

But off to our right, near the bold front of the hill, about a dozen Tucunas were grouped around a couple of small fires, and in a number of the huts nearest them others were still lying in hammocks. So far as we could see, these were the only men in the camp.

Those who were awake were eating or squatting stupidly around the fires. None was talking, and all acted sluggish, as if still half drunk with the liquor swallowed last night.

"Tucunas who have come in to join Black Hawk but arrived after he left," Pedro guessed. "They have found liquor—or brought it with them—and are waiting for him to return."

"If they're drinking up the Hawk's private stock there'll be trouble for somebody when he comes back," muttered Senhor Tom. "But that's their own look-out. Let's move farther along."

Letting ourselves down until we were below the level of the edge, we worked away along the slope toward the rear of the place. Then we rose to the top and looked around again, saw nothing new, and stole downward once more. Repeating this move, we kept on until noon, when we had gone almost around the encampment and seen all that was worth while.

Then we retreated into the rolling ground through which we had come after leaving our canoe. The last we saw of the Tucunas showed them still loafing where we had first found them, taking a drink now and then from clay jars, and ignorant that other men were near them.

We had found that the flat top of the hill ran back westward for a long distance from the lake—how far we did not know, for we kept at the edge of the camp. Only enough ground had been cleared to make room for the closely crowded huts; and beyond these the forest still stood.

Through this untouched back-jungle ran a broad path, probably used by hunting-parties when the Hawk's gang was here. On the northern side the hill dropped much more steeply than where we had come up, and at the bottom on that side was marsh-land.

The place would be easy enough to attack, if men enough could be brought in to rush it from the rear and the southern side. But it would take a big force to do that, for we judged from the number of crude shelters that the Hawk's followers must number at least three hundred—probably more.

We had also found Black Hawk's foul nest. Not far from the spot where the Tucunas lounged, under a big tree, stood a low but long house with walls of woven withes—the only walled shelter in the town. Around it was a clear space, and on each side of its one low dark doorway were signs showing beyond doubt whose house it was;

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black wings of the bird *caracara-i*, pinned to the walls by thorns.

We had watched that house for some time, thinking perhaps some woman left behind by the *cafuzo* might show herself. But none appeared. Either the last woman to be kept captive there had been taken away with the gang or—more likely—she had been killed when her master tired of her. The house was empty.

Whether any more bones lay along the base of the hill we did not know, for we made no search there; but it was more than likely that others could have been found without much hunting. And though we did not return to the canoe by the same route and thus did not see those broken bones again, we had not forgotten them.

Our North American comrade's face was more grim than at any time since we left the river. And Pedro and I, once more squatting in our dugout and chewing our dry fish and farinha, looked at each other and said no word.

When Senhor Tom did speak, though, it was not of what had happened but of the future.

"Well, what next?" was his question.

Pedro still said nothing, but looked at the little stream flowing past the end of the canoe. It was black water.

"Let us find out more about the country on this side of the hill," I said. "There is not much use in our trying to explore the two large creeks to the north and east, at least not now. We know of one way into this lake—the way we came from the Jundiatyba; and that is enough for our purpose.

"When we go out perhaps we can go by the northern stream and see where it leads. But now, since this day is half gone, we can use it best by going up this little black water and perhaps finding a better camping-place."

Pedro nodded. But Senhor Tom looked toward the south.

"I'm more curious to look around between here and the little creek down south," he remarked. "Tell you what—let's split up. I'll spend the afternoon browsing around in the bush. You fellows take the canoe up-stream.

"If you find a good place, make camp. Come back here for me a little before sundown. You can't go very far on this little creek with the dugout, anyhow, so you won't have to travel far coming back. How about it?"

I objected to parting company with him, even though Black Hawk now was absent. But he snorted.

"Think I'll get lost? I'm no greenhorn in the bush. And there's no danger from those Tucunas yonder. They're too lazy to come prowling down here—as long as the booze holds out, anyway. If they did I'd scare them to death with my thunderstorm voice."

Pedro smiled. Then a queer light passed over his face, as if a sudden thought had come to him. I waited for him to speak. But all he said was:

"I want to see more of this stream, *senhor*. So Lourenço and I will go up it and meet you later, just as you say. Will you take your maps, so that you can find this spot again?"

And he laughed.

"Humph! I've half a mind to bat you over the head for that. But the maps would be no good anyhow—this place isn't charted. If you fellows don't find me here when you come back, use that wonderful instinct your *coronel* bragged about and find me. You couldn't possibly miss me."

"Not as long as you wear boots," I retorted. "We could track your heels anywhere."

He grinned, but made no answer. We pushed the canoe out from its hiding-place, set him on the other shore, and watched him fade into the wilderness of big trees and creepers beyond. When he was gone we paddled slowly up the sober-colored stream.

It curved gradually around to the right, swung off to the left for perhaps fifty yards, and then became a fairly straight waterway leading back into the farther bush. The shores on both sides shelved upward at a gentle grade, and both were heavily grown with good-sized trees and dense smaller stuff.

The only openings we saw were low runways used by animals, and nowhere along it were any signs of men. Several good camping-spots were scattered along it, but we passed them by while we looked farther on.

After a time we reached a fallen tree which blocked our boat like a wall. Only the top of the tree was in the water, but its branches made an obstacle past which no canoe could go. Beyond it, however, the forest seemed quite clear of bush. So, having plenty of time, we pushed our craft

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up to the right shore, got out, walked under the big tree-trunk—held up off the ground by stout limbs—and stole on up the black-water stream.

Around us the forest was dim, cool, and quiet. Among the big tree-columns we passed for some distance, still finding only the traces of beasts and birds. At length I paused and said we might as well go back. But Pedro, looking ahead, said he was going farther.

"I am much interested in this creek and these woods," he said. "We may as well move on as go back and wait for the North American."

And he went ahead. I followed.

We had left the water, or rather it had left us; for it rambled off to the left, while we went straight on, expecting to find it looping back before long. Now we did find it again, and with it we found something else—a couple of empty banana-skins caught among weeds at a little curve.

Pedro pointed at them. We went onward more carefully, hunting now for the person who had eaten that fruit.

A little farther on the smoothly rolling valley which we had been following came to an end. Hills rose steep before us. Between them the stream lay at the bottom of a cleft gouged out by the weight of flood-waters in the wet season.

Somehow the spot looked familiar. But in my years of bush-roving I had seen such places more than once, and I gave no thought to it, for I knew I never had been here before. I only wondered whether the banana-eater lived beyond that ravine.

The question soon was answered. Silently we climbed the hill before us and passed on along the upper edge of the cleft. Then the ground lowered a little, the trees thinned, and we looked into a shallow bowl through which the little creek trickled lazily. In this bowl grew a few banana-trees, some peach-palms, mandioca, and corn. And working in the corn were two women.

I stood watching them in astonishment. And I was surprized not so much by seeing women as by the fact that they were clothed. Indian women of the bush, such as I was accustomed to seeing, wear only a *tanga* around the hips. But these two were covered from shoulders to knees by loose wrappers. Yet their brown skins showed them to be Indians.

Looking around for their house, I saw none. Still, a score of huts might be hidden among the big trees surrounding the place. The smallness of the corn-patch, though, showed that very few people could be living near.

Pedro coughed. He tried to smother the sound, but the women heard it. They jumped like frightened deer, whirling to face us after their first leap. We stepped out into plain sight, holding up our hands as signs of friendship, and advanced toward them.

They backed away, but did not run. One stopped and stood waiting, her head forward, and face wrinkled into a squint. The other kept retreating.

"Have no fear," I said in Tupi. "We come as friends, and our hearts are clean."

No answer came. Reaching the first one, we halted. Though we now were within six feet of her, the squinting wrinkles and frown remained on her face. They were wrinkles that never would fade until death took her. She was old.

For a few minutes we stood quiet, letting her look us over and glancing at the other, who now had stopped at some distance from us. In spite of her shapeless garment we could see that she was much younger than the woman near us, and she looked quite handsome. But we made no move to go toward her. Turning my eyes again to the old woman, I found her staring intently into our faces.

"We are friends, mother," I repeated. "Where are your men?"

She squinted at me for some time before answering. Then she began to mumble. No men were allowed here. This was the home of the *Mai d'Agoa*—Mother of Water. Any man coming here would be swallowed alive by the great snake unless he went away at once.

Yes, and she could put on us a curse that would turn our guns into worms and our bones into water, so that we could not run away when the great serpent came for us. She could burn us, too—burn us without fire. She could do other terrible things. Unless we left instantly she would do all of them.

By the time she was through with her threats I knew what she was—a mad old *feiticeira*, or witch. So I did not laugh at her. I told her to keep her snake and her fire and her curse to use against an evil bird which surely would carry off her handsome

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daughter if he ever saw her; the black *caracara-i* which lived on the hill by the lake.

If I had called her a crazy fool and other insulting names she could not have flown into a greater fury. Her old eyes blazed like those of a maddened cat. She spat like a cat, too, and her bony fingers worked like claws. Then she burst into curses of Caracara-i.

She used such language as I had never before heard from an Indian woman—talk that could only come from insane hatred, and words which no maiden ought to hear. It made me feel uncomfortable, and I glanced toward the younger woman to see whether she was still standing there and listening to the other's ravings. Then I felt better. She had moved on and disappeared among the trees.

The old woman paused a minute to catch her breath. Then, shaking her clenched hands at the air, she screamed:

"I will burn you! Come here, Caracara-i, and I will burn you!"

"If he comes here he is more likely to burn you," I started to say, but the words stuck on my tongue.

All at once there came over me again that queer feeling that I had been here before, and now even the words of the old woman seemed to be the same ones I had heard when I last visited this place. Without thinking why, I looked up into the air, half expecting to see there a huge hawk sweeping around.

Pedro chuckled.

"He has not yet come, Lourenço," he said, "but he may come soon. Now show me your beautiful butterfly. Do you know where you are? This is the place of your dream."

XII

I STARED around, unable to believe it. I had forgotten that dream, and Pedro had not spoken of it since we left the Jundiatyba. But he remembered it well, as his words proved.

"Through a dim forest of big trees to hills between which black water flows," he reminded me. "Over the hill to an open space where an old woman shrieks at the black hawk. That is how we have journeyed today, and this is the place. Now I am on fire to see the lovely white girl rest on your shoulder. You love the ladies so well that you surely will not omit that part."

"I am no lady-lover, and well you know it," I growled, still looking around and feeling queer.

He chuckled again. Then he asked the old woman a surprizing question.

"Where is the white girl?"

She drew her face into a tighter squint and peered at him as if wondering whether she heard right.

"Come, mother," he coaxed, "tell us. Soon we and other white men will destroy Caracara-i. But first let us take the white girl to a safer place. Where is she?"

Slowly the wrinkled face spread in a cunning grin.

"Kill Caracara-i first," she said. "Show me his head. Then ask for a white girl."

"Why do you want his head?" I asked. "What has he done to you?"

The grin disappeared and her face twisted in new fury. Again she cursed Black Hawk. Then, growing somewhat more quiet, she talked in a rapid, rambling way, saying some things which meant nothing to us along with other things which were fairly clear.

By listening and putting together what we could understand, we made out that she had lived long in this place before Black Hawk came; that before he made his camp on the hill by the lake a few Indians had had their homes there, all of whom were related to her by blood; that in some drunken rage he had killed several of them and driven the rest out, never to return.

So she hated him for destroying all her people. She would get his head; she would burn him without fire, and so on.

While she talked away we glanced up at the sun and saw that it was time for us to go. But first Pedro broke in to ask her again about a white girl. She snapped that no white girl was there. We decided then to look at her house, if we could find it, and learn anything we could from the Indian girl. So we pushed past her.

"Over here," Pedro directed. "I watched the girl go."

At once the old woman began to make new threats and order us away. But we went on, paying no attention to her, to the edge of the forest where Pedro had seen the girl disappear. There we found a short path, and at its end, between two huge trees, a small walled house in whose one little doorway stood the young woman. As we approached she retreated into the house.

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We halted outside a minute, the old woman shrilly menacing us with all kinds of torture. Then I told her to be still, speaking so gruffly that she obeyed. With her noise stopped, Pedro called gently to the girl, telling her she need have no fear and that we should go as soon as we had looked around. With that we walked in.

The inside of the place was so dark that we could see little, but we did see that nobody except the Indian girl was there. She stood against the rear wall, holding an old machete ready to use. She was handsome, there was no question about that even in the dim light; but there was no question also that her skin was very brown.

We both spoke to her again in Tupi, asking a few questions about herself and about any white girl. But she made no answer at all. She only stood there, ready for anything, cool and silent. So, with a smile and a nod, we walked out again.

"Watch over your little one carefully, mother," I said as we turned away. "The claws of the Hawk are cruel, and he is not yet dead. Good day to you."

And with no more words we swung away toward the creek which had led us there.

Back along that black stream we hastened to reach our canoe in time to make a camp and meet Senhor Tom. We had no time for talking until we were paddling down toward the lake. Then Pedro said—

"The best part of your dream has not yet come true."

"Nor is it likely to," I scoffed. "Why did you ask that foolish question about a white girl?"

"Perhaps it was not so foolish. She promised me a white girl if Black Hawk was killed."

"She did not," I disputed. "She only told you to ask her for one; she did not say she would give you what you asked. She wants Caracara-i killed, so she let you bait yourself. Then later she snapped out the truth—that there is no white girl. And we saw for ourselves that none was there."

To that he made no answer.

At one of the places we had noticed on the way up, we stopped long enough to make a rough camp, slinging our hammocks and leaving our food in them. Soon after that we met Senhor Tom at the place agreed on.

"Thought you fellows never would show up," he greeted us in the low tone we had always used since reaching the lake. "I got scared without my maps, so I've been sitting here all afternoon waiting for you to come back."

The mud on his boots, though, showed that he had traveled a good deal that afternoon and returned very recently.

Without questions, we took him aboard and returned to the camp, where we had just enough time to eat and make all snug before darkness fell. Then, sitting close together in our hammocks, we told him of our discovery up the creek.

"Say, I don't mind having you fellows kid me about my maps," he said in a tired tone, "but when you try to string me with any such cock-and-bull yarn as that you're going too far. It's a bum joke."

"It is no joke at all," we insisted. "The place is there and the women are there, and you can go with us tomorrow and see them for yourself."

"All right, I'll do that. You've got to show me. I didn't find a thing worth while this afternoon with all my tramping—oh yes, I snooped all around between this creek and the one we came in by—so I might as well spend tomorrow in your dreamland as anywhere. Gee, I hope Black Hawk gets back soon. This country will be a slow place to hang around in if he stays away another month."

"Perhaps we may learn something about him by getting near enough to those Tucunas on the hill to hear their talk," I suggested.

He shook his head.

"No chance," he said. "They'd be with him if they knew where he was. And I can tell you without moving from this hammock what they talk about. Fellow with a thirst says, 'Pass the jug.' Fellow with the jug says, 'You go to ——!' That's all."

"No, we could learn little from them," Pedro agreed. "But I have an idea, *senhor*, which may be foolish but can do no harm. You spoke today of scaring them with your thunder-storm voice. Why not do it? Hide somewhere and shout that death trails the Hawk. Then get away before they find you."

"What's the use?" objected the blond man.

"This is the use. The Hawk undoubtedly rules his men by fear. His lies about white men help him too, but I feel sure that many Tucunas follow him because they fear to

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refuse. Fear is a powerful weapon, but it is two-edged, and the man who uses it must beware lest it cut him.

"Now those Tucunas on the hill wait until the Hawk comes back, and if they are scared by a great voice predicting death to the *cafuzo* they surely will tell the rest about it when they see them. Perhaps we can even scare the army itself when it returns. And when they get the word from up the river that the white men will come against the Hawk——"

"I get you," Senhor Tom cut in. "Not such a bad idea. It'll be fun to kid those fellows anyhow. But they're likely to trail my boot-tracks, and that won't do."

Pedro laughed softly.

"They can not trail any man on water. Let your warning be given from the lake after dark, or in the foggy morning, when the canoe can not be seen. We two can paddle so softly that no sound of a boat will be heard. You can throw those deep chest-tones a long way, yes?"

The American began to laugh too as he thought about it.

"Sure I can! And to make it all the louder and more ghastly I'll make a megaphone. Roll up some bark into a horn, you know. It'll sound hollow and most gosh-awful. Say, let's do it now! What say?"

We were not only ready to do it but able to make the horn; for some of the trees around us were thin-barked and easily peeled. By lighting a few matches we soon succeeded in stripping a three-foot roll of bark and tying it into shape. And then, with Senhor Tom still chuckling, we got into the canoe and felt our way slowly down the stream.

Black though it was, we worked out to the little bay without bumping much against the shores. After traveling through that dense gloom the open lake seemed almost light, though no moon was up. But we knew the Tucunas on the hill, who probably were sitting around fires, would be unable to see us out on the water when they came to the edge; so we paddled on easily until we were a few hundred yards from their camp. There we stopped.

Senhor Tom lifted the bark roll to his mouth, and boomed out in the Tupi tongue—

"Beware!"

Deep, solemn, weirdly hollow, the word rolled out over the murky water and echoed from the hill.

"Beware! Death follows Caracara-i!"

In the long minute following the slow words we thought a thin yell of alarm sounded on the shore.

"Wo to the Hawk!

"Wo to his followers!

"All shall die!

"Beware!"

The message boomed outward and upward like the voice of doom. Faintly from the hill echoed the last words—

"Die! Beware!"

The horn sank. Silently, carefully, we slipped the dugout back toward the bay and our creek.

"And I guess that'll hold you for a while," Senhor Tom muttered. "If not, I'll hand you another earful at dawn."

And he did. After finding our way to camp again—which was not easy, for we traveled without light and could rely only on our judgment and the feel of the creek—we slept until the noise of birds woke us to the faint light of a new day. At once we drove down-stream to the lake and out into the heavy fog. And when we thought we were in the right place our companion spoke again in Tupi, using his deepest tones.

"Caracara-i is doomed!

"Death sweeps upon him!

"Wo to his men!"

No sound came from the camp. We waited for the time of three slow breaths, Senhor Tom still holding the bark roll at his lips. Then he spoke again.

"The white guns come!

"Beware!"

With that he nodded, and without noise we moved back to shore. We did not go just right, and had to hunt for the mouth of our bay. But we soon found it, and long before the mist lifted we had disappeared inland, leaving no trace behind.

"I've done all kinds of things," the explorer said when we had finished our breakfast, "but I never before tried to be the angel with the trumpet. If I could only watch those fellows roll their eyes and shiver it would be more fun.

"I know Tucunas pretty well, and I'll bet that bunch is covered with goose-flesh right now. Anything supernatural gives them chills. But now that I've qualified as an angel I'm all set to put the jinx on that witch of yours. Come on, let's go."

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We went. Up to the fallen tree we paddled, and on to the split hill we tramped, and over to the edge of the open bowl we crept stealthily. The sun shone bright and hot into the garden-spot, and over it butterflies flitted and bees droned. But the women were not there.

Crossing to the little path, we walked to the small house, seeing nobody, hearing no human sound. At the door we stopped and spoke. Still no sound came. We looked in, went in, came out and stared around. Nobody was in the house.

Moreover, nothing else was in it. The hammocks, the machete we had seen in the girl's hand yesterday, the small cooking pots and the other little things needed in daily life—all were gone. There was no sign of violence or of hasty flight. But the inside of that house was as bare as the outside.

All around that open field we scouted, finding no other house or hiding-place. The only living things we saw were the butterflies dancing in the sun and a few parrots which flew over, two by two. And when we were back at the place where we had first stood, Senhor Tom looked hard at us.

"Humph!" he said, striding off on our back-trail.

We followed, saying nothing. There was nothing to say.

XIII

EIGHT days passed. Eight days of quiet and concealment in the bush. Then we found orselves quite active.

Not that we spent those eight days lounging in our hidden camp. We moved around a good deal in that time, and once we even shifted the camp itself to a better place a little farther up-stream. We talked of returning to our curved cove across the lake, where we could make fires without so much risk of being traced by the smoke; but we decided against it.

Here we were near enough to the hill of the Hawk to reach it without much travel, yet far enough away to be quite unsuspected; and fires were hardly necessary, as we could not shoot any game without betraying ourselves and thus had no meat to cook. So we remained on the little black stream leading to "Dreamland," as Senhor Tom mockingly called the place where we had failed to show him the old witch.

Every night after dark and every morning in the mist we went out on the lake, and the blond man croaked hollowly into the ears of the Tucunas. We knew they now were expecting, and dreading, the voice of the great demon of the lake, and we never gave them hope that the demon had left the place.

After five days of these repeated warnings we had proof that they were taking effect. Eight men from that hilltop took to their canoes after the sun was well up, and paddled away fast, looking back as if fearing some awful monster would rise from the water and swallow them. They went out by the wide creek to the east, and they did not come back.

The next day, watching from the shore, we saw four more quit the place in the same manner. These disappeared by the creek at the north; and, like the other eight, they did not return. Later in the day I sneaked up to the camp and counted those who remained. Only nine were there. So in six days we drove away more than half the men we had found on that hill, and ourselves remained undiscovered.

"Your weapon of fear proves sharp, Pedro," I said when we three were together again.

"Too sharp," Senhor Tom commented. "We don't want to drive all those chaps out, or they can't scare the rest later on. Guess I'd better ease up."

So, though he did not stop his ghostly talk from the lake, he did suspend his threats against the Tucunas. By dark and by dawn he spoke only one sentence—

"The white guns follow Black Hawk's trail."

When next I spied on the camp I could see only six of the nine who had last been there. Whether the other three had fled or only gone hunting in the forest to the rear I never learned. But at least six men stayed there to the end.

These warnings and spyings, however, took up only a short part of each day. The rest of the time we scouted around the hill, learning all there was to learn about the country on that side of the lake.

We followed the path leading from the back of the camp into the forest—Pedro and I stepping on Senhor Tom's tracks and treading out the marks of his boot-heels with our own bare feet—until we found that it broke into several faint *picadas*, or

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hunters' trails, which in turn faded into pathless ground.

We also traveled north to the upper creek. And once we crossed the lake in the early mist and spent the day prowling among the eastern hills.

These trips gained us nothing except a better knowledge of the country and a new map which the explorer drew on the back of an old one in his idle moments. Pedro and I grinned at each other over that map-work, for neither we nor the North American needed it, and we did not stop to consider that the time might come when other men might want such a chart.

But we took care not to let Senhor Tom see our grins, for we knew he would retort with some ridicule of our witch and our "dream-country," and we did not feel like being laughed at.

Pedro went once alone to that place where the old *feiticeira* and her daughter—or, more likely, her granddaughter—had lived. He slipped away without saying where he was going, and when he returned he told Senhor Tom only that he had been roving without result. But later he told me where he had been, adding that there was no sign of the women except that some one had been gathering food from the garden-patch within a few hours of his visit.

"The poor creatures fear us and are hiding in some secret hole of the forest," I said. "And it is not strange, even though we spoke kindly to them. We have not shaved for a long time, we look wild and rough, and for all they know we may be a pair of *renegados* who pretend honesty in order to spy on them and then betray them to Caracara-i. Let us keep away from that place in the future."

"Until we have taken Black Hawk's head," my comrade smiled. "Then I shall return there and shout until they come out, and I shall ask to see the splendid butterfly with the white girl's face."

I said no more; for, instead of the butterfly girl, my mind saw again the broken bones at the base of the Hawk's nest.

Yet we never went again to the little home of the witch of the black creek. Things soon came about which made such a trip useless.

On the afternoon of the ninth day we three were idling in the wilderness between our camp and the hill. We had been roving aimlessly among the timbered hills that day, unable to think of anything new to do, but too restless to pass the time lolling in our hammocks.

And now, in one of the prettiest little forest nooks we had yet found, we had bathed in a sparkling little cold brook and were lounging on the shore, watching the water swirl around our dangling feet. The brook made a pleasant little murmuring noise, the warm air from a sunlit space just beyond us crept around our bare bodies, and we sat silent and content.

Then suddenly Pedro lifted his head.

Into the quietness had come a murmur which was not that of the brook. It grew into a hum. It seemed to be at the north, behind us. We turned around and looked, but saw no life of any kind.

"Swarming bees?" suggested the North American.

We listened a moment longer. The hum still sounded, but it did not move. It remained at one place in the north, seeming to be up among the tree-tops.

"Not bees," Pedro decided. "Men."

"By Judas! The Hawk's gang!"

We jumped up, hastily pulled on our clothes, looked to our guns, and started northward, traveling quietly but losing no time.

Now our knowledge of the country helped us to make speed. We pushed rapidly over the rolling knolls, and as we went we worked somewhat westward. With the top of that hill swarming with men, we should be fools if we tried to scale its bald sides. Instead we headed for the rear of the camp, where we could climb amid the timber and watch from the thick cover on top.

As we neared the place the hum grew heavier, but not much louder; the low rumble of many male voices grunting and calling and disputing about their shelters. And among all those man-noises we could not hear one with a note of laughter. The sound was sullen and cheerless.

When we had reached a point at the edge of the upper forest where we could watch the movements and the faces of the nearest men, we found that our ears had not deceived us. They looked as sulky and sour as they sounded.

Stocky, dull-eyed, scowling at their crude huts, and growling at one another, they passed about and worked at small tasks with the sluggishness of men doing things

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only because they had to, dissatisfied with life and all things in it.

The faces were those of men not bad by nature; men who, left to themselves, might be easy-going, good-natured fellows with no ill will toward any one, but who now were slaves to fear and brute power. And on his bare chest every man of them carried the mark of his slavery—the shape of a hawk's wing, painted on the skin with the black dye of the *genipapa* plant.

Believing Black Hawk's lies and fearing servitude under white men, these Tucunas now found themselves in the grip of a worse master than any white ever would be.

If we had needed any proof of this after watching them a while we should not have been long in doubt. Just as I was wondering if it would be possible to dodge unseen along the hillside to a place where I could look at the house of Black Hawk, the infamous *cafuzo* himself appeared. And when he had gone back toward the lake he left behind him an example of his method of ruling his gang.

One of the Tucunas not far from us had been acting sick. He had sunk on his haunches in a narrow lane that ran the whole length of the camp, and there he squatted with head hanging. None of his mates gave him the slightest attention, except to step around him instead of shoving him out of the way. But now they did give attention to something up the lane.

A wave of low warnings came down the pathway. The men in it slunk aside among the huts, leaving the way clear. Down that lane came a man alone. The instant my eyes rested on him I knew he was the dreaded Caracara-i.

Tall, gaunt, black of skin and hair and eye, with the hawk nose and lank hair of an Indian, but the thick lips and brutal jaw of the lowest kind of negro, he did not need the big circlet of black hawk plumes he wore around his head to prove him the cruel creature of whom fearful tales were told.

His face and his walk would tell that. He stepped along with the silence of a drifting bird of prey, his eyes darting from side to side, his head held forward as if seeking something to swoop at. And in the sick man who blocked his path he found his victim.

The wretched Tucuna still squatted there, perhaps too miserable to hear or understand the muttered warnings of the others. A foot away from him the Hawk stopped, eyes glittering, mouth curving downward in a malicious smile.

His hands rose to his hips and hung there motionless, curved like talons; and for the first time I noticed that he wore breeches and weapons. The breeches, cut off at the knee, were dyed black with *genipapa*. Under his left hand hung a machete in a black sheath; under his right, a black-butted revolver in a black holster.

For a long, still, tense minute his claws hovered over knife and gun as if he were deciding whether to shoot the poor creature in the back or cut his throat. Then they sank, empty. And the Hawk spoke—

"You whelp of a dog, stand before me."

The harsh voice held a sinister whining note like the treacherous cry of the bird of death. And if the squatting man had been at his home in his own village and heard that bird on his roof-peak he could not have been more fear-struck. His eyes opened in terror, his jaw fell and worked quiveringly, he lurched as if his legs had lost all strength, and he fell over on hip and hand.

"I am sick," he gasped.

"Sick," the Hawk echoed; the whine becoming a snarl. "I will give you something to be sick about."

Like a flash he stooped and clutched a limp arm. He yanked the man staggering to his feet. They stood so close now that I could not see just what hold the Hawk had had on the arm, but from the victim's face I saw he was in torment. He moaned, gasped, then screamed out sharply.

Something cracked.

Another scream rang in our ears. Then the man was free. He reeled away, sobbing with pain. His arm hung limp.

The other Indians cowered back, gray-faced. Black Hawk peered around, his mouth still curved in that merciless downward smile. Then, as no man moved, he came onward a few steps, looked about the end of the camp, finished his inspection, and returned toward the front of the place. Not until he was lost down the lane did any one come from the huts. Then they gathered around the broken man, who had stumbled into a hammock.

Nobody spoke.

We three looked into one another's hard faces. For the first time I realized that Senhor Tom was gripping my gun, holding it down, and that I had been trying to lift it. Now he released it.

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"All in good time, all in good time," he whispered. "But not now. Let's go."

We went. As we slipped away into the dimness behind, and then dodged down the hill and swung away over the knolls, we heard no sound behind. The hum of voices was stilled.

And as we went, we let Senhor Tom get some distance ahead.

Then Pedro spoke hoarsely.

"*Ai Jesu!* Think of a helpless girl in the claws of that fiend!"

XIV

BACK in our camp, Senhor Tom leaned against a tree and smoked slowly and thoughtfully. When his cigaret was finished and stamped into the ground, he flipped his revolver from its holster, emptied it of cartridges, and took his usual "hip-shot" practise.

He had been doing this twice each day, just as he had said he would; and he had improved. Remembering the first time we had watched him, we could see that his draw had been a little stiff at the time. But it was smooth enough now, and fast as a snake-strike besides. Yet this day, after drawing and sheathing a dozen times, he frowned as if not quite satisfied with himself.

"Lourenço, give me a try-out, will you?" he asked. "Stand in front of me. Hold your right hand so. Drop it as suddenly as you can."

Wondering, I did so. Holding my right hand at my hip, I dropped it again and again. And each time his gun was out and on me before I had more than started the movement. Yet he never looked at my hand. His eyes always bored into mine.

"All right. Now, Pedro, try this one. Hold your hand behind your back. Don't move your arm. Just shut your fist suddenly. Lourenço, see if he gets the jump on me."

Standing where I could see my comrade's hidden hand and the explorer's gun, I watched them try this new trick. The revolver jumped from its scabbard before Pedro's hand could close.

"*Por Deus, senhor!*" I exclaimed. "You must have a devil's eye. How can you do that?"

He smiled, reloaded the weapon, and rolled another smoke.

"Guess I'll get by," he said. "I did it by watching your eyes. That's what I was after—to see if I could spot your move before you made it. Speed of the hand is all right, but the ability to read the signs is more important. When you can let the other fellow go for his gun, and then beat him to the bullet, you're fairly good. D'you know, I'm sort of glad the Black Hawk packs a gun. It may simplify things."

"What do you mean?" Pedro asked.

"Oh, I don't know. Only when a chap straps a gun onto his leg he's expected to know how to use it."

"Are you going to challenge him to a duel?" I puzzled.

"Oh, no. My gosh, no. I'm absolutely terrified by the mere thought of such a thing. You forget that I'm an angel and my weapon is a trumpet. I'm just going to preach from the lake a few days more, and maybe then the Hawk will get religion."

With that he chuckled, looked at his watch, and said we had better eat. When we had done so he spoke more seriously.

"You fellows saw what happened this afternoon. You saw how dispirited and grouchy the men were before that. They realize pretty well now what they're up against, but they haven't the spunk to break loose from this self-constituted 'king' of theirs, nor the vision to look ahead and see that the future will be worse than the present. So they stick.

"Your guess a while ago, Pedro, was correct; Black Hawk rules now by fear alone. But, as you very aptly put it, fear is double-edged and likely to cut the man using it. Our little job for the next few days is to throw fear into the whole gang with our demon stunt.

"It's a safe bet that those Tucunas who have already heard us have started the news trickling around the camp before now. When we've given our usual performance this evening all the newcomers will be doing a lot of talking under their breath, and I'm betting desertions will start before we're three days older. Best of all, we'll undermine the nerve of that nigger-Indian himself—I never knew one yet who wasn't afraid of spooks.

"I don't think there will be many more recruits to the Hawk ranks. The word we sent out through the Passés on our way down will fix that. On the other hand, I

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doubt if that word will reach as far as this lake. So now we've just got to concentrate on this gang here and carry on a war of attrition, if you know what that is—wearing away the enemy. When we've got the Hawk where we want him—well, then we'll see."

Then he took down from the ridge-pole where it hung, the flaring roll of bark which long before this had been made into a real speaking-trumpet and carefully bound with bushcord. In the fading light of sunset we glided down-stream on our nightly trip. Just inside the mouth of the creek we lurked until all the lake was wrapped in gloom. And after a stealthy journey to the outer end of the bay and a careful scrutiny of all the open water we could see, we floated out to our usual place.

There, pointing the horn high, so that his voice would seem to come from the upper air rather than from the surface of the lake, the North American croaked his slow prophecy of doom.

"Death follows Caracara-i!

"Wo to him, slayer of men and slayer of women!

"Wo to all men who follow him!

"The white guns come and Black Hawk falls!

"Beware!

"Beware!"

And, as ever, back came the hollow echo from the hill:

"Beware! Beware!"

Back to our bay we slid. There, at the mouth, we floated motionless, watching the outer water.

"Now if you're a he man, Mister Black Hawk," muttered Senhor Tom, "you'll go out there hunting the demon. But if you're the cowardly brute I think you are, you'll stay on land and sweat cold. And as sure as you do that, your grip on your men begins to slip."

We waited long, but no sound came to us. No paddles dipped on the lake, no voices spoke. The blond man murmured in a satisfied way. We floated inland and paddled back up the black creek, which we now knew so well that we never bumped the bank even in deepest darkness.

In our hammocks we talked for a while about the necessity for keeping under cover at all times. Much against our wishes, we decided not to spy again on the camp for several days to come. The chances of being spied upon in return by some one of the many men up there, or of being traced by some wandering hunter, were too great.

We had taken pains at all times before this to make as few tracks as possible in our roamings, being particularly careful to cover the North American's boot-marks; and to make new ones just now would be not only useless but perhaps fatal to our plan.

It was not so much a matter of protecting our lives as of carrying out our purpose of breaking the Hawk's hold on his men. To succeed, we must let nobody know strangers were here. We must be ghosts, demons, heard but never seen.

We also discussed the possibility of being caught on the lake by canoes concealed alongshore to trap us when we voiced our warnings.

"No chance of that," the explorer declared. "The Hawk showed tonight that he hasn't the nerve to come out himself against the demon, and if I know anything at all about Tucunas he can't drive his men to do it either.

"Even if he did force them to, they'd get ashore as soon as they were well away from camp, hide in the bush, nearly die of heart-failure when they heard the voice, and later report either that nothing appeared or that they saw a gosh-awful monster standing in the middle of the lake. They're not white men, remember.

"No, what he'll do will be to increase his savagery to cover his own yellow streak, and make his serfs fear him all the more. The psychology of brutes is the same everywhere. Those boys are going to have a tough time, and I'm sort of sorry for them; but they may as well get a stiff dose of terrorism now, and be driven into quitting him, as to live all the rest of their lives in despair.

"From now on it's a finish fight between the Fear Brothers—fear of the brute *versus* fear of the infernal. I'm backing the latter. I'm betting a gold double-eagle against your tobacco that the Hawk will be busted flat within a fortnight without our firing a shot. Want to take that up?"

We did not bet. Yet if we had, we should have won. More than one shot was fired, and within less than half the time he set. Like many another good plan, ours was upset by that snaky thing on which no honest man counts—treachery. And even while

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we talked the treachery had been done.

The next five days were very long. We were confined to that creek like prisoners, and we felt like prisoners. We could not hunt, we could not tramp, we could not make any noise.

Only in the early mist and the darkness did we leave that little stream and sound our blood-chilling warning through the hollow horn. On those journeys we never saw or heard any sign of any one seeking us, and if any man came near our camp during the long hours between our trips he failed to find it.

The only times when we saw the Tucunas were when we grew so desperate from inaction that we drifted down to the end of the creek and, hidden there, watched an occasional canoe float past the bay-mouth in search of fish.

Then we observed that even in broad daylight the men looked around often in a scared way, as if fearing a demon of water or jungle. And, seeing this, we grinned at one another. Our weapon of fear was steadily cutting deeper.

On the sixth day we could no longer stand the slow strain of waiting in ignorance. I declared that, tracks or no tracks, I was going to find out what result our campaign had brought. The others were as eager as I.

We decided first to paddle down to the little nook where we had first hidden our canoe on this stream, then work through the bush to the mouth of the bay and look out along the lake to see how any men on it were acting. After that we would steal slowly to the hill.

But when we stood on the ground above the lake, we spied something that made us drop our caution and go tearing madly northward. It was a pair of canoes, which must have passed by our bay while we were moving through the tangle to the point, and which now were some distance beyond us.

In those dugouts were six people. Only four were paddling—two in each boat. They looked around and ahead like men newly arrived, and paddled as if a little in doubt. The other two seemed to be wounded, sick, or prisoners. They sat amidships, bowed over with either weakness or despair. And though the paddlers were Tucunas, the passengers were not.

"*Por Deus!*" Pedro muttered, squinting in the sun-glare thrown up from the water. "New Tucunas come, bringing captives to the Hawk. Lourenço—this light blinds me—are those prisoners white?"

I peered under one hand at the receding dugouts. The glare hurt my eyes too, but something about those two pairs of drooping shoulders made my tongue stick a moment. Then I got my voice.

"Sunburned whites or Passés—I can not tell which. But the one in the second canoe is a woman!"

"By Judas!" snapped Senhor Tom. "You're right! A morsel for the Hawk. A virgin being carried to the sacrifice. But, by the living ——, this is going to be the bloodiest sacrifice that beast over yonder ever saw! Come on!"

He hurled himself headlong into the bush. We crashed after him. Then we were in open ground under the big trees. With all speed we dashed for the hill of the Hawk.

XV

PANTING, we stopped in the edge of the jungle at the base of the hill. We had run blindly, caring little where we might come out. The arrival of that woman captive meant the end of our career as ghosts. To help her we must become men. So, as I say, we reached the hill at the point to which chance led us. And that point was the spot where lay the broken human bones.

At sight of those grim reminders of Black Hawk's cruelty Senhor Tom snarled like a maddened jaguar. His yellow beard bristled. We too growled. Yet we stood quiet a couple of minutes to control our loud breathing.

Looking upward, we saw a few Tucunas in open spaces along the edge. If they stayed there they would see us when we started to climb. But, as it happened, they did not; for before we emerged from our cover they all turned, looked beyond them, and then faded out of sight. We knew the prisoners had been brought into camp.

"Straight up," said the blond man.

With no word of reply we left our cover and climbed. Nor did we hug the trees along the way. We gave no thought to concealment until we reached the top, and we needed none; for nobody now was looking down that hillside.

As we reached the edge we found plenty of men in sight, but all were looking away

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from us. And after working along toward the lake a little farther, we found a place where we could stand beside a stump and see what they saw.

Quietly the men of the Hawk had drifted toward the house of their ruler. But none dared approach it too closely; and before the house was an open space where stood the newcomers and the *cafuzo* himself.

The paddlers of the two dugouts were standing between us and the pair of prisoners so that we could not see the faces of the captives. But we could see their sides, their bound hands, and the backs of their heads. And we knew they were a man and a woman of the Passés.

Black Hawk, head forward and curving hands resting on his hip-bones, was smiling that downward grin of his—a grim smile more evil than that we had seen when he tortured the sick man; the merciless leer of the vile brute into whose power a pure young woman has fallen.

He made no move. He looked at the girl and listened to the men who had brought her. And so quiet was the place that we could hear most of what those betrayers said.

Their spokesman was telling that he and his fellows were there to join Black Hawk against the white men. He said these Passés were enemies of the great Hawk. All the Passés, he added, were saying white men would soon come to destroy the Hawk and all who fought for him.

At this I saw a sudden movement of heads among the rest of the Tucunas; man looking at man with the same thought in mind—the warning of the demon of the lake.

The *cafuzo*, too, suddenly shifted his gaze, looking from the woman to the man prisoner. His hideous grin faded; his face sharpened with rage.

The Tucuna went on to say he and his mates did not believe such talk. So they had killed one man who brought that lying word, killed also others of his family, and brought to the Hawk the handsomest girl and strongest man of that family for his amusement.

The Hawk spoke.

"Well done. Caracara-i will amuse himself well with these two. He will bend them to his will—until they break! Ha-ha-ha!"

The whining screech of his laugh chilled me. It chilled his own men too; I saw them shrink back. But then the Passé man spoke out, brave even in despair.

"Caracara-i, you die. The white men come. These Tucunas speak with split tongues. They are no warriors but snakes. They killed my people by sneaking murder. They killed my father asleep. They caught me asleep. They are not men. No other Tucunas come to you. Only the white men come. You die."

Something in the voice pulled at my memory. I had heard it somewhere. Then the four Tucunas, snarling, turned on him. As they moved he swung to face them. We saw who he was; Jawuah, son of the Otter.

And the girl was the winsome Merere, the Arrow.

Pedro hissed through his teeth. His rifle rose.

"Not yet, Pedro!" harshly whispered Senhor Tom. "Plenty of time. We're all in this game. Wait!"

My comrade growled, but did not shoot. Black Hawk moved. We saw the traitorous Tucunas shoved back. The hateful whining voice of the *cafuzo* sounded.

"Back, dogs! Black Hawk will amuse himself. Passé, your bones are strong? Soon you will dance on boneless legs for me while your woman——"

He stopped. His head went forward a little farther, peering beyond the Passés and the Tucunas. Other heads turned to look in the same direction.

Several men were coming nearer among the huts from the rear of the camp. The others made way. Then into the open space came three more Tucunas—men on whose breasts the black-hawk wing showed. And they dragged with them another woman.

"*Vive Deus!*" I whispered. "The Hawk's men have caught the girl of the witch!"

It was so. Pedro and I recognized at once the shapeless garment and brown but handsome face of the girl of the black creek. She was fighting to hold back, struggling to get away, but making no outcry.

Her captors shoved her forward to stand beside Merere. For an instant the two girls looked into each others eyes, sisters in misery. Then the whining screech of the Hawk's laugh made them, and us too, look at him.

His face now held an evil joy which had not been there even when he gloated on Merere. His yellow teeth showed between his coarse lips. One hand shot out, grabbed the new girl by an arm, and yanked her toward him.

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"The white men come? Ha-ha! No, but their women come! The blue-eyed girl turns Indian but she comes back to the Hawk! Ha ha ha! Now Caracara-i has two slaves in one day, and a man whose bones shall crack—crack—crack! Let the white men come—and bring their women to the Hawk! Let them come——"

He yelped again in his terrible mirth.

"All right, —— you!" grated Senhor Tom. "Here comes one white man! Pedro, Lourenço, I'm going in. You stay here and cover my back. Lie low. Take this rifle."

He strode away from the stump.

"We go with you!" Pedro snapped.

"Shut up! Stay here until you're needed. Over there you're two white men—here you're a dozen or a hundred. Keep down!"

We caught his idea and, unwillingly, obeyed. Without coming to the edge, no man could know how many of us might be here. We would keep them from coming to the edge. Just what he intended to do we did not know, but we realized we were more valuable behind him than with him. We dropped, guns ready.

Alone, carrying no rifle, he strode straight for the Hawk.

Tucunas, seeing him pass, stared in blank amazement. Black Hawk's laugh froze. The two girls turned toward us, and as they saw the blond-bearded man swinging toward them, both cried out—little gasping cries of wonder and hope. And Jawuah, his somber face suddenly gleaming, spoke again loud and clear.

"The white men come!"

The swaggering walk of that lone white man was in itself enough to convince all who saw him that more were at hand. Though every Indian along his way was painted with the sign of enmity to whites, he gave them no more attention than if they had been worms. He did not put a hand to machete or revolver.

He tramped along with a gait as easy and contemptuous as if backed by a thousand rifles. And when he reached the little group standing before the Hawk he shoved a couple of the traitorous Tucunas aside as arrogantly as if he, not the Hawk, were master of that jungle.

And no man laid a hand on him. Even the men he shoved away stepped farther aside of their own accord after one look at him. For the moment the only one in all that camp who showed any sign of fight was Black Hawk himself. His hands rose and hung over his weapons in that hovering, ready, but waiting way of his.

"*Por Deus!* What a man!" Pedro breathed as the North American halted and glared into the vicious black face of his enemy.

Then out boomed the thunder-storm voice of the blond man himself.

"Yes, the white men come! And Black Hawk dies! Passé, you speak truth. No more Tucunas come to this camp. We whites have seen to that. Now we are here to see to the filthy black beast who lies about us to the Tucunas, wrecks women, tortures prisoners and murders the helpless. Black Hawk, whine your last whine!"

Motionless, wordless, the Hawk poised with eyes boring into those of the white man. And the explorer, his own eyes never leaving those of his foe, spoke on in that great voice which all heard.

"Tucunas, hear me. The great white chiefs who live where the water is salt know that you have been deceived by lying words. They are patient with their red brothers. They will not punish those who go to their homes and live in peace as before. They allow no man, white or black, to make slaves of the Tucunas. Only those shall be punished who have stolen women or who now fight against us. All others go free——"

One of the four traitors who had brought the two Passés, and who now heard the promise of punishment for their deed, began sneaking behind Senhor Tom. He gripped a short spear. His stealthy step foretold murder.

We fired.

At the double crash of our big-bored rifles every man jumped—except Senhor Tom. The assassin dropped, dead before he struck the earth. The Hawk's hands darted to his weapons. But he did not draw. His face jerked toward us, then back to the dead man on the ground. And Senhor Tom, though his right hand now hung ready at his belt, did not touch his gun-butt. Nor did he look at what lay behind him.

For a long minute, while the men of the Hawk stared fearfully toward our stump and then back at their master, there was no sound. The black man's head lifted, and again his eyes fixed on the blond-bearded face before him. Savagely Senhor Tom roared his challenge.

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"Caracara-i, liar and murderer, shoot! Here stands one white man. Your hand is on your gun. You dare not draw it. You can only lie about white men—you dare not fight one. Hawk? Bah! Dog—snake—beast of the mud! Crawl on your belly and show your men what a slobbering coward you are! Down!"

One instant longer Black Hawk waited. In that instant his power over his men vanished. Every eye was on him, and every eye saw that fear gripped him. Then, with a gasping snarl, he jerked his revolver upward.

Flame stabbed from the blond man's hip. A shot roared.

The Hawk's gun spat—downward. He staggered—tottered—fell. As he went down, his revolver cracked again uselessly. Face in the dirt, he lay still.

XVI

SENHOR TOM whirled on the prisoners. In the Tupi tongue which he had been speaking he snapped to the women—

"Into the house! Quick!"

As he spoke he sheathed his gun, drew his machete, cut the cords on the wrists of the Jaguar, gave the long knife to him. Instantly he faced around again, his gun out once more.

"Tucunas," he roared, "go to your homes in peace! The man who made you slaves lies dead by the hand of the white man. All who fight us shall follow him in death."

They stood as if stunned, staring at the black thing which had been the terror of their jungle. The witch's girl, too, stood as if not understanding the command of Senhor Tom to go in. But Merere seized her arm and pulled her away, and the pair disappeared through the doorway.

The Tucunas stirred then and looked at one another. Perhaps they might have obeyed the white man and gone without trouble, if not attacked. But Jawuah spoiled that chance.

Gripping the machete, he sprang with a yell of hate at the three living Tucunas who had killed his people and brought Merere to worse than death. For a second they shrank back.

His knife chopped into the neck of the nearest, and the man fell asprawl. The other two closed with him. Grappling, cutting, stabbing, clawing, they went wheeling and stumbling around in a death-lock.

And though some men of the Hawk realized that the Passé was avenging himself only on those who had cruelly wronged him, others who were slower of thought and still bewildered saw only a light-skinned man destroying those of their own tribe.

A rumble ran among those men, and they turned toward their shelters for weapons. At that all the others did the same. Yells of rage arose, and the camp became a whirlpool of rushing men.

We sprang up and dashed for the house of the dead Hawk. Men who blundered into our way we knocked spinning. Blows fell on us, but we wasted no time in stopping to return them. We held our gait, and very soon we were beside Senhor Tom.

"Thanks!" he grunted, snatching his rifle from my left hand. "Looks stormy. By thunder, though, we've got a chance! Look there! They're fighting one another!"

It was so. Men who did not want to fight us were falling foul of men who did. Knots of struggling Tucunas wrestled and shoved and struck. Flimsy huts fell apart and came down on the heads of those thrown against the poles. Machetes fell and rose dripping red. Spears flew in air. Shots sounded bluntly from old rifles. The whole camp boiled with fight.

Panting, red from wounds, the Jaguar came running to stand beside us. His two foes were down; one with throat slashed, the other with a great hole in the body. His eyes glared like those of the fierce jungle animal whose name he bore. But even in his lust for more Tucuna blood he remembered his duty to white men, and instead of leaping at more antagonists he stood shoulder to shoulder with us, and waited.

He did not have to wait long. Before he got his breath a small mob of howling Tucunas charged at us with spears.

We opened fire. The first ones fell. Others stumbled over them. We shot as fast as we could pump our levers. The ground became paved with dead. Then our hammers clicked down on empty magazines. And still a few men came on.

Senhor Tom dropped his rifle and fought on with his revolver. Jawuah jumped forward with machete whirling and struck. We jammed fresh cartridges into our receivers and shot down the last men in that attacking force. When our rifles were empty

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again Senhor Tom had reloaded both his guns and was ready to carry on the fight. But no more fighting was needed.

Jawuah came striding back, leaving behind him two more dead Tucunas. Beyond the corpse-strewn space the fighting among the Hawk's men was dying down. The struggle with one another, the rapid roar of our guns, and the sight of their mates falling dead before us had driven some sense into them. Soon the conflict among them ended.

They hung back, glowering at us. They saw plainly enough that we were only four. But they saw what we four had done. Before they could decide whether to quit or attack us anew Senhor Tom settled the question for them.

"Peace, fools!" he boomed. "Why destroy yourselves? We are your friends. Wash the sign of this dead bird off you and go home. If you fight more we shall wash off that sign with your blood."

They stared at us. They stared at the dead. They shifted their feet and looked at one another. The only sound now was that of hoarse breathing.

"Let those who want peace stand to the right. Those who want war with the white guns move to the left," commanded Senhor Tom.

Many men moved to the right. Others followed more slowly. Soon all were massed together.

"It is well," the blond man approved, letting his rifle-butt sink to the ground. "The great white chiefs shall know you are once more their friends. See that you remain their friends for all time. Throw this dead thing—" he pointed to Black Hawk—"into the lake for the alligators. That is all it ever was good for. But first bring here the men who dragged into camp from the forest the brown girl wearing a long shirt."

The Tucunas moved about. Voices called, asked questions, gave answers. We waited patiently, but the men were not brought. At length a couple of Indians came forward and began looking at the faces of the dead. When they had looked at all, they stood before us and one spoke.

"The girl who lived with the devil-woman brought death to those who touched her. All those men, Cariwa, died before your guns. They were this man and that one and that."

He pointed to each in turn. As he faced us again we looked into his eyes and saw that he spoke truth.

"It is well," repeated Senhor Tom. "So die all who abuse helpless women. Now bury your dead and go. Let night find you on your way home. And carry to your people the word that Black Hawk is food for the alligators, and the white man your friend."

"So it shall be, Cariwa," the man answered, and the pair turned back to their mates.

"Watch them," directed Senhor Tom. "I've got important business in the house."

He grinned suddenly and turned away. A minute later we heard his voice beyond the doorway. But he was no longer using the tones of Tupahn the Thunder-storm, and what he was saying we could not hear clearly. Besides, we were too busy watching and listening to the Indians to pay attention to what went on behind us.

The menace had died out of their faces now, and none muttered any threat. But we let them see that our guns were ready, and we spoke no word to them, even though some grinned at us in a shamefaced way as if wanting to show friendship.

Men came forward and, after peering at Black Hawk as if still afraid of him, turned him face upward. The sight of the big bullet-hole between his ribs left no doubt that he was dead. Yanking at his arms, they hauled him away toward the lake, his head hanging back, his dingy hawk-plumes dragging in the dirt, his revolver trailing beside him in the death-clutch of the hand that had been too slow.

And that was the last we ever saw of the merciless creature who would have made himself king of all the jungle between the Jurua and the Javary—bumping along through the camp-refuse on his way to the jaws of the ugly beasts of the mud.

Other men gathered up the bodies of their fallen comrades and bore them away toward the forest at the rear. And when the ground before us again was clear the rest of the army of the Hawk turned to gather up what few things they owned before starting homeward.

A hum of talk grew among them. Their voices became more cheerful. Peace and freedom and safety for their women again had come to their country, and already they were forgetting what was past and looking

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forward to the drinking and dancing when they should be once more at home.

But they had not forgotten the demon of the lake. Sunset was creeping nearer all the time, and repeatedly we heard the word *"anyi,"* which means "devil." No man there wanted to stay another night on that hill, even though the white men now were there to protect them from the demon.

And though we made no attempt to count them, we saw easily that their number had shrunk much since we first spied on their swarming camp. During the past five days many Tucunas must have sneaked quietly away into the bush, afraid to stay longer near Black Hawk and the awful voice which croaked so hollowly from the dark waters. Now the rest lost no time in deserting that accursed spot forever.

Past us went a straggling procession heading for the water and the canoes. Some eyed us somberly, some marched with gaze fixed before them, some slunk past as if ashamed, some laughed and called us friends and bade us farewell. To these we gave the old Tupi godspeed, *"Ikuana Tupana deirum."* Before long the last man had faded from sight over the edge of the hill. The army of Black Hawk was no more.

Then we turned to the long low house on which the dingy hawk-wings had hung as the badge of the power of the *cafuzo*. They hung there no longer. Jawuah had torn them off, and the last sign of the rule of Caracara-i lay on the dirt.

The Jaguar himself, gashed and battered and smeared with red from face to feet, but paying no attention whatever to his hurts, stood beside the black doorway looking silently down at Merere, whose big eyes were on us two. Leaning against the wall on the other side of the opening, Senhor Tom was coolly smoking a cigaret.

"Senhor Tupahn," said Pedro, "your name here now will be not Thunder but Lightning. You blasted the Hawk so swiftly that no man could see your hand move. Where is the daughter of the witch?"

"It's a poor thunder-storm that hasn't a little lightning," the explorer laughed. "As for witches' daughters, I haven't seen any."

"But the brown girl——"

"Ah, yes. The *senhorita* is inside—removing her brown skin, most likely. I gave her a chance to weep on my manly chest and all that, but all I got was a polite request to take the air."

"Por Deus!" I cried. "She is white? The English girl?"

"No, not English—" he started to say, when a new face appeared in the doorway.

We looked again on the brown girl, now no longer brown. The stain which had made her an Indian was washed away, and the black hair which had hung about her face was caught up in a hasty coil around her head. Without the paint her skin seemed rather pale, but her lips were like a red flower and her eyes like the night sky—deep, dark blue. Handsome before, she now was beautiful.

"Nossa Senhora!" I muttered. "The butterfly girl! The blue-black butterfly of the dark creek!"

"I agree that she is a dream," said Senhor Tom.

Then, changing from Portuguese to English, he went on:

"Miss Marshall, allow me to present the three men to whom the overthrow of Black Hawk is directly due; the Senhores Lourenço Moraes and Pedro Andrada, and Jawuah the Jaguar, of—er—various places in the United States of Brazil. Also the little lady whom you have previously met—Merere the Arrow, of the Rio Jundiatyba. Brothers and sister, this is Miss Marion Marshall, of the United States of North America."

XVII

MORNING dawned again on the lake, the hill of the Hawk, and our camp on the black creek. But this time no hollow voice spoke doom from the mists, and when those mists were gone the sun did not shine down on the camp of the Hawk's army. That camp, like the army, was gone forever. The top of the hill now was covered only with the ashes of the shelters which we had fired before paddling away in canoes left behind by the departing Tucunas.

But if the Hawk's hill was empty, our camp was crowded. Before this we had been three; now we were six. We had given up two of our hammocks and the whole *tambo* to the two girls, slinging the third hammock among the trees and sleeping in it by turns while those who were awake kept fires going and saw that no beast of the forest came too near.

In those cool dark hours of the night-watches we had talked with Jawuah and

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heard his tale of murder and capture. He and his father, the Otter, had visited several scattered villages of the Passés and two in which lived Tucunas. The Passés all had gladly accepted the message and sent it on.

The Tucunas had received it rather sourly, but those in the first town, after some wrangling, had decided to keep away from the Hawk. It was in the second Tucuna settlement—a drunken little place of a few huts—that treachery had ended the Otter's life just as he was planning to return to his own village.

There, while Lonta and his son slept, some Tucuna had crushed the Otter's head with a club. The Jaguar, roused by the sound of the blow, had been struck and stunned while springing up.

When his senses came back he found himself tightly tied, and heard the murderers of his father say that, as they were going to join Black Hawk, they would take him there for punishment by the Hawk himself. They would take also the handsomest girl of the Otter's family to please the black "king." And, leaving him closely guarded by older men, they went up the river.

Six of them went. Four returned with Merere. The other two, he learned from her, had been killed after the party entered the village as friends and then suddenly attacked their hosts. But the three Passé men there also had been killed, and so had Itariapu, who tried to protect Merere. The other women and the children had fled to the bush, and Merere had been carried down-stream and, with the bound Jaguar, brought to the Hawk.

So the death-warning of the black bird *caracara-i* on the morning of our departure from the Otter's home had come true. Jawuah spoke quietly of it all, showing no bitterness now that he had avenged his wrong on the traitors; but we knew his heart was heavy.

We knew, too, that it was heavier because, even after his splendid fighting, the lovely little Merere still looked far more at Pedro than at him. But that was a thing which none of us could help. A maid looks where she will, not always where she should.

This was the simple tale of the Passé pair. But the story of the other girl, recently an Indian of the back-bush, but now a North American beauty, still was untold. She had spoken hardly a dozen words since leaving the Hawk's hut, and then her voice, though low and musical, had sounded very tired.

After what she had been through, we could hardly wonder at this, and we had swallowed our questions until she could rest. But now, with the new day streaking the trees, and no danger near, we looked for her to explain why she was here.

We waited, however, for some time. Under the shadow of the *tambo* she slept on long after the rest of us were astir. We breakfasted quietly, little Merere smiling shyly at Pedro now and then as the meal went on, Jawuah solemn as ever, and we three pretending not to see the condition of affairs between the two Passés.

I began to wonder whether the Arrow would willingly go back to the Jundiatyba jungle with the big stout-hearted fellow who was her fit mate. But when we had finished eating and our tobacco-smoke was drifting in the air, Pedro settled the question.

"Today we go," he said in Tupi. "My brother the Jaguar, who now is the chief and the only man of the Otter people, must return to protect them with his strength."

"It is so, Cariwah," agreed Jawuah.

"The young ones must not be left long unguarded," Pedro went on. "My own heart is anxious for the safety of my woman and my little sons on the Javary. Now I return to them with all speed."

His gaze was over the heads of the Indian pair, as if he looked at something far away. Jawuah started and gave him a long stare. The girl's eyes widened; her lips opened as if to speak, quivered, closed again without a word. She dropped her head and looked long into the dying fire. We three smoked on.

"I have thought," added Pedro, "that now, since the Otter has gone to his fathers and the Jaguar is the one man left, it would be wise for the Jaguar to take his people to the Ypihah Aku and live there among the men of Warm Wind.

"My brother is strong and brave and terrible toward his enemies, as I have seen. Yet death lurks ever ready in the jungle, and at its own time it strikes us all. My heart would be lighter about my brother and my sister if I knew they and the little jaguars who shall come to them were with the men of the Warm Creek."

The Jaguar's steady eyes went to the Arrow's face. After a time he said:

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"My brother's words are good. And since the Jaguar can help the white men no more, he returns now to those who need him."

He arose, stepped to the canoe in which he had come from the camp of the Hawk, and stood waiting, his gaze fixed on the creek. Slowly then Merere stood up and took a step toward him. We three straightened. She paused and looked up for the last time into Pedro's face.

"*Herench, ikuana Tupana deirum,*" she whispered.

"Go with God, my sister," he echoed. "And make happy the life of my brother whose heart you have pierced."

She passed on to the canoe. In it she picked up a paddle. Jawuah settled himself, sank another paddle into the dark water, and pushed gently away. With no backward look they floated down-stream and out of our lives.

"And there they go, paddling their own canoe," Senhor Tom approved. "Pedro, have you really a wife and children?"

"None, *senhor*. But it was the best way."

"You're right. Well, about all that's left now is to break camp after Miss Marshall has her sleep out. We'll have to go north and see that she gets a steamer, of course. While we're waiting, how about some fresh meat?"

"We were thinking of that," I answered. "We two will get some. You are her countryman, so you had best stay here with her."

And we took our rifles and went seeking some of the game which had been teasing us during our days of silence and stealth.

When we came back, bringing a big *mutum* bird and a couple of fine fat pacas which we had scared out of their burrows, we found the white girl sitting in her hammock and sipping hot coffee. Senhor Tom was gathering more wood for the fire.

"Good morning, *senhorita*," Pedro greeted her in English. "You look as fresh and dainty as an orchid after a night of rain."

Her deep blue eyes looked coolly into his smiling brown ones. Soon an answering smile grew on her red mouth.

"Hardly that, I fear," she replied. "But I do feel ever so much better. Last night I seemed to be absolutely dead."

"You will soon feel better yet," he promised. "You have lived too long on corn and bananas. Here is meat—a *mutum* and pacas. They will give you new strength."

She looked rather doubtfully at the dead things. Senhor Tom spoke up.

"How would broiled turkey and roast suckling-pig taste, Miss Marshall? Sounds tantalizing, eh? Well, that's about what you're going to get, minus the fixings. We neglected to bring along the garnish, I'm sorry to say."

"How very careless of you! But I'll forgive you if you will prepare the rest of it at once."

"Right! Hop to it, boys, before the lady expires from starvation. She couldn't eat a mouthful last night, remember."

We remembered, and we "hopped to it." While we roasted the meat I looked often at her and wondered; wondered not so much about how she came there as at the unconscious dignity of her manner.

Barefoot, bare-armed, clothed only in that ugly floppy shirt-like thing, she still seemed queenly. Yet she was not big and stately; she was just a slender, graceful girl whose head would hardly reach up to the jaw of my tall comrade Pedro.

"*De puro sangue*," muttered Pedro.

"Thoroughbred. That's it," Senhor Tom agreed in an undertone.

Then, loading up a bark plate with fragrant meat, he presented it to her with a bow. But she arose and told him to put the bark on the ground.

"I have learned to eat in the jungle fashion," she said. "And you must all eat with me. Yes, I dare say you have breakfasted, but you must be as hungry for meat as I. And I know I am going to make a perfect pig of myself, so I want company in my disgrace."

"Well, if you put it that way——" said Senhor Tom.

"We shall all be pigs together," I finished. I thought it quite a clever remark, but when every one laughed at me I decided to use my mouth only for eating. And while we four squatted in a circle and ate heartily, and afterward when she sat again in the hammock and Senhor Tom talked, I said nothing.

We still asked no questions. But Senhor Tom told the tale of how we had come there, giving me and Pedro much more credit than was necessary. When he had finished she told us what we had waited for.

She was the English girl of whom we had heard, but she was neither English nor the

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daughter of the man who had brought her there. Her home was in a place called Virginia, in North America. The man was her mother's brother, and he was English; a wealthy man who was very fond of traveling and had been in almost every country of the world.

The girl also was fond of roaming about and seeing new things, and she and her English uncle had traveled together more than once in North America. Then, while visiting her home before starting to South America to see some places where he had not previously been, he had asked her if she cared to go with him. She did.

The first place they visited in Brazil was Para. There he decided to make the long trip up the Amazon to Iquitos, in Peru. The pair came up on one of the big boats, going ashore wherever the steamer stopped, but finding the journey rather dull.

In time they reached Viciado, and there they were advised not to land because the town was not worth seeing and some harm might come to them. But the Englishman would neither listen to any advice nor allow any one to go with him to protect him. He went ashore, and with him went the girl, feeling safe at his side.

When they were well away from the river and out of sight from the boat, they stopped to give a few coins to some children. Suddenly a thick cloth was thrown over the girl's head from behind and she heard a hard blow, a gasp, and low coarse voices. Before she could cry out, she was choked, lifted, and carried for some distance by several men.

Then she was dropped among bushes and kept there a long time with a man's hand always on her throat, choking her whenever she tried to call or struggle away. She heard the steamer whistling, then heard it no more.

After that voices talked loudly, the cloth and the choking hand were taken away, and she found herself in the jungle among evil-looking men who seemed to be half-breeds. Near her lay her uncle, dead and robbed.

He had been struck from behind so hard that his skull was broken. After making sure he was dead, searching him again, and even taking his clothes, the men pitched him into water near-by and turned on her.

They took her rings and watch and little gold necklace, tore her clothes nearly off in a hunt for other valuables, and then, after an argument which she could not understand because she knew nothing of Portuguese, forced her into a canoe. Two of them took up the paddles and drove the canoe away.

They traveled three days, keeping her always under watch, or tied so tightly that she could not escape. Then they dragged her up the hill of the Hawk and handed her over to the vile *cafuzo*.

It was almost dark when she reached the camp. After one look at the Hawk she tried to run and throw herself into the lake. But he caught her, dug his fingers into her arms until she nearly fainted from pain, dragged her to his door, and struck her so hard that she fell stunned inside.

As it happened, she upset a jar of water in her fall, and the water rushed over her head, reviving her almost at once. He remained outside a few minutes talking to the men who had brought her there. Before he entered the dark house she was up and had found a rifle.

She knew how to handle a rifle, and she was cool enough to examine this one to see whether it was loaded. It was not. So she used it as a club. When he came inside and peered around the floor to find her she struck him on the back of the head, knocking him senseless.

Then night fell. In the darkness she slipped down the hillside into the jungle. And there, with no food, easy prey to any forest beast which might find her, she wandered all that night and for two days after that.

Somewhere she had heard of walking in water to leave no trail, and she waded long distances in the little brooks. She slept wherever she fell exhausted. She grew so faint that she lost all sense except the will to keep going. Then at last she found herself in an open place with an old Indian woman bending over her.

This old woman cared for her, brought back her strength, stained her skin brown and gave her the bark-cloth robe which she still wore. The girl could not understand her talk, but she could see that she was mad. In spite of this they got on well together, and after a time the girl learned that she was almost safe under the old woman's care.

Several Tucunas with the black-hawk wing on their breasts came there, but when the old woman walked at them with fingers wriggling and eyes staring, they fled, yelling with fear. And from that day until Pedro and I came she saw no man.

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Then, because she did not know the Tupi language we spoke, she could not understand us and did not trust us. After we went, the pair fled and hid in a great hollow tree well back from the clearing. But yesterday afternoon, while the girl was getting food from the garden, she heard a thundering sound in the forest; and when she reached their tree she found that it had fallen and killed the old woman under it.

She ran from the place—and ran into the clutches of three Black Hawk hunters who were prowling the woods. They dragged her away to their chief. Then we came, and the Hawk fell.

"And now——" she said, and paused.

"Now you go home, plucky girl," said Senhor Tom. "We go to the Amazon, and I'll see you safe on a steamer. Don't worry about the transportation. Before we burned the Hawk's house last night we ransacked it, and we found money enough to carry you around the world—de luxe style, too. We've decided that it's yours. So that's all right."

"But it is not all right, Mr. Mack," she objected, smiling but shaking her head decidedly.

"I can not permit that. If you will be so kind as to advance my transportation—and enable me to clothe myself more becomingly—I shall be very grateful. But I will accept nothing more. I am eternally indebted to you three——"

"Oh, forget it!" snapped Senhor Tom. "We just happened around at the right time, and you don't owe us a danged nickel. Now——"

"——and the money you found should be divided among you as the spoils of war," she continued very coolly. "I shall accept nothing except absolute necessities. That is final."

Their eyes fought. Then he laughed and rubbed his jaw.

"Oh, very well. Anything you say. We three will divide the swag after subtracting your share. But since clothes are more or less necessary, will you accept my spare kit until we hit the river? I always carry one, and I don't need it now, and you sure do. You look a fright in that dowdy thing."

Then she laughed—a merry little laugh that was music to us and made her altogether lovely.

"So I do not look like an orchid dripping with dew? Mr. Andrada, you are a very gallant fibber. Mr. Mack, your spare kit will be very welcome and much more comfortable than this garment."

Senhor Tom laid out his extra khaki. We walked away for a while. When we came back and looked at her we almost whistled.

In the snug breeches, loose shirt open at the throat, and laced boots, with her glossy black hair newly coiled and pinned up with tough twigs, her deep eyes shining mischievously under curving brows and her face aglow with the new life given by long sleep and strong food, she made a picture to tug at a man's heart. And if she knew it, who can blame her for that?

"By thunder!" Senhor Tom said in Portuguese. "A man's woman! I say, *amigos*—er—I am not going back to headquarters with you. Something might happen to this lady, and—I am a Brazilian government official in a way, and—it becomes my official duty—er—well——"

"We understand perfectly, *senhor*," Pedro laughed. "A new trail opens before you."

"Just so. And I'm going to stick on it like a bloodhound. Tell the *coronel* to send the things I left behind to me at Rio. I may write up that cursed report of mine some time, but for a while I expect to be quite busy."

Then in English he said:

"Since you have made yourself presentable, Miss Marshall, I will permit you to ride in my canoe. Let's go."

"So kind of you," she smiled. "I shall work my passage. I really am not bad at a paddle."

"Glad to hear it. I think we'll make a good team. That is—er— Well, what are you fellows snickering about? Load up!"

We loaded and pushed out, leaving behind us an empty *lambo* and the shapeless bark-cloth garment that was the last sign of the Indian girl of the black creek.

Down that creek we swung, and up across the silent lake, and out along the wide stream leading north. And as the hill of Black Hawk vanished behind us Senhor Tom took his eyes off the slender back swaying before him, glanced around, and boomed out the song he had sung far back on the Javary; the same song, but with slightly different words.

"Merrily we roll along,
Roll along,
Roll along,
Merrily we roll along
Toward the deep blue sea!"

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A Debt at Sea

by Bill Adams

Author of "The Bosun of the Goldenhorn's *Yarn"*

I—A NEW CHUM JOINS

A TALL three-skysail clipper, a long, low-in-the-water four-mast bark, the old *Silberhorn* of Liverpool, lay moored to the bollards beside the African dock, Antwerp; her sails aloft, her holds deep-laden, her sides bright with new paint—a fly-away packet ready for sea, on a June tide of the year '97.

In her half-deck sat three apprentices, eating the fare provided for such as they aboard tough clipper ships.

The half-deck was a tiny room; two bunks placed fore and aft, two more 'thwartships, with, in the angle between them, a little table beside which stood the sea-chests of the lads who dwelt there. There were three ports; two looking over the deck to the main shrouds, the other forward upon the main fife-rail; a small lamp, swung in gimbals, supplying light by night.

Paddy O'Brien, a lad of Irish breeding, with a touch of hobgoblin devilment in his carefree blood, a second voyager now starting upon his third voyage, sat at the end of the table; he was a bony boy, with fair hair and pale blue eyes, a thin, almost knife-like nose, sensitive nostrils and a small mouth; sitting silent—thinking of a girl who had bidden him farewell on Plymouth Hoe a day or two ago.

Opposite him sat the new chum, a soft-faced lad who had just joined the ship for his first voyage to sea; a tall, green-looking youth with crow hair and blue eyes, high cheek-bones and little, close-set ears—a lad by nature shy, and now keeping quiet amongst strangers; anxious to learn their ways and to be one with them.

At the side of the table sat the oldest hand, Polly Thompson; the son of old Bijah-Bijah Thompson, skipper of the far-famed colony wool clipper *Thermopylæ*—now an aged man retired from the sea, dwelling ashore. It was Polly's second voyage with the *Silberhorn*, but his third to sea; for, before getting a touch for the West-Coast ships and transferring to the big bark, he had made a voyage with the full rigger *Patriarch*—a clipper of the same line as the *Thermopylæ*.

Polly was an unusual-looking lad; named after a Sydney barmaid by his old shipmates of the *Patriarch*, owing to her prettiness and to his peculiar ugliness—a case of contrasts such as one finds amongst knock-about lads. He was six feet two and a half in his big bare feet; loosely knit, with long, pendulous arms, and at the end of them a pair of monstrous hands—hands now famed for their unyielding grip upon bellying canvas, as well as for their power to beat the bunt down in a piping squall. His hair was black and long, his eyebrows all but meeting above his nose; his nose his most peculiar feature—very long and straight, and ending in a queer-looking sort of a blob; his

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lips inclined to heaviness, but shutting thin and scarce visible when things were going against him; his eyes pale gray, at times expressionless, at times again twinkling with rays of laughter—or, when his lips grew thin, setting cold and hard as shining points of steel.

They sat in silence, each dreaming his own peculiar dreams; each munching with evident dislike the coarse food before him.

Suddenly the light was darkened; and, looking up, Polly saw framed in the port above him the face of a stranger, a large round face peering down upon the table; a face in which were set two large and very deep-blue eyes surmounted by a shock of yellow hair; a face whose cheeks were soft and pink—a smiling face with large and regular white teeth showing through parted lips.

"Alphonse," said Polly, "come in and make yourself at home."

"——, yes—don't stand there blocking the light out," said O'Brien.

The newcomer, entering, took a proffered seat; Polly, as he did so, shoving the hash-kid in front of him, bidding him help himself.

Alphonse, for such, since Polly had so named him, was henceforth to be his name, looked curiously into the hash-kid, puckering his brows. Sighing, he placed a hand within his jacket, and, drawing forth a long-necked bottle, put it on the table.

"Alphonse, my son, you give me a pain. Don't you know that wine—jumping snakes!—it's champagne, isn't it?—is not allowed in a half-deck, eh?"

Polly, with a sidewise shove, removed the stranger from his seat, and sought within his sea-chest the wherewithal to open the bottle. He filled his pannikin and O'Brien's, and together they drank the newcomer's health; Alphonse standing beside them, bowing low, murmuring—

"Ze charm, ze charm—I azzure."

Once more, placing a hand beneath his jacket, the stranger, drawing forth a bottle placed it upon the table; and once more the claw-like fingers of the oldest hand embraced the bottle; holding it to the light, peering from dense brows up at the Belgian boy, remarking:

"Port wine, eh, Alphonse? Say, son, are you a wine merchant?"

This time he filled the pannikin of Smith, the new chum, also, and again the stranger's health was drunk.

Alphonse was wreathed in smiles; his blue eyes twinkling as a pair of twin mountain lakes at Summer sunrise; his hands thrown out, palms uppermost.

"Ze charm, ze charm—I azzure," he said.

With a deep bow he took himself off; stopping as he passed the open port to gaze once more upon them, murmuring—

"Ze charm, ze charm—I azzure."

When he had gone O'Brien, turning to Smith, asked—

"Queer fellow, was there some one here a while ago or did I dream it?"

Smith passed him a pannikin to smell, and sniffing it, he turned to Polly.

"What do you make of it, Polly?" he asked.

"Dunno—reckon it must have been a French missionary trying to get a footing. What else *could* it have been?"

That evening O'Brien, having a date with a Belgian girl, invited the others to accompany him ashore.

"She's got two sisters," he said, "and the old folks are *It*. They'll be tickled to meet any friends of mine; c'mon."

Returning aboard after midnight, Polly in the center, and not only O'Brien's but Smith's arm also about his waist, and with his arms encircling them, they entered the half-deck—O'Brien lighting the murky lamp.

"Say, O'Brien, what is it?" cried Polly as, looking at the spare bunk, he observed what appeared to be a sleeper huddled under the blankets.

Withdrawing them, he bared the face of the stranger; the stranger as he did so waving an arm, smiling, sleepily remarking—

"Ze charm, ze charm—I azzure."

Shrugging his shoulders, Polly turned into his bunk, and, rolling out again with an exclamation of surprize, held high a long bottle.

"O'Brien, look around your pillow," he said; and O'Brien, doing so, withdrew a similar find.

Filling the pannikins, they once more wished the newcomer excellent health—Smith, holding a pannikin to the sleeper's lips, inviting him to drink with them; the newcomer sleepily opening his blue eyes, taking a sip from the pannikin, murmuring—

"Ze sheep, ze zailor—I dreenk 'eem," and, falling back again to continue his slumbers, muttering feebly—

"Eet ees ze charm."

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II—SEAWARD AWAY-OH

IT WAS a starry mid-April morning, with no sign of dawn yet streaking the sky when the tug came to take the tall clipper out to the stream; the shore lights glimmering along the wharves and riverside; a faint glow from the twinkling lights along the streets overhanging the town. Dropping anchor in mid-stream, she lay awhile awaiting the full flood-tide; the hands hurrying to the windlass as dawn began to show across the flat lands; the sky faintly gray, the stars blinking above the still river, their reflections dancing on the muddy water.

Tom Swift, a squat fellow with a sandpaper face and bowed legs, narrow eyes and tobacco-stained lips, and a voice as the sigh of sea-winds far away, lifted a chantey; the windlass bars clanking, the feet of the hands stamping, the water lap-lapping along the clipper's sides; the stars seeming as if stooping to catch the lilt of the sailor's singing, while the crew roared the chorus:

"Come all you young sailors that follow the sea,
an' away, Rosianna.
Come all you young sailors that follow the sea,
an' I've just come over the mountain.
And I'll tell of an incident happened to me,
an' away, Rosianna.
And I'll tell of an incident happened to me,
an' I've just come over the mountain."

The refrain rolled away across the river, losing itself amongst high buildings ashore; wavering far up the dim streets of the city; awakening children, to cry to their mothers—

"Mother, who is it sings in the night?"

Mothers replying, soft-voiced, a-shudder at the cold sea's toil:

"Hush, dear—'tis a ship goes seaward. Her sailors are singing."

Tom's voice picked up a rollicking strain; his feet stamping to the lilt of his song, singing farewell to the poor folk ashore—dwellers of streets and dusty byways.

"Oh, I used for to plow the fields up an' down,
and away, Rosianna.
Oh, I used for to plow the fields up an' down,
an' I've just come over the mountain.
But it's now that I'll plow the wide ocean around,
an' away, Rosianna.
But it's now that I'll plow the wide ocean around
an' I've just come over the mountain."

Suddenly he dropped his song, bowing his head above the windlass bar, crying—

"Heave—oh, heave a pawl."

Old Fin Hansen, the gray-bearded, grim-eyed sail-maker, bow-shouldered from his years of sea toil, lifted up his head; singing as the roll of waves upon a rocky shore, singing with the clank, clank, clank, of the pawls, with the lap of the river round the clipper's bow, with the whisper of the coming of another day:

"I would I were old Santy's son,
dooda, dooda.
I would I were old Santy's son,
dooda, dooda, day.

"Let her take it, boys," he cried as they gathered up the chorus, making the river ring from bank to bank, the shore lights swaying to the tune of it.

"Blow, boys, blow, for California-oh.
There is plenty of gold,
So I've been told,
On the banks of the Sacramento.

I'd build a ship three thousand ton,
dooda, dooda,
I'd build a ship three thousand ton,
dooda, dooda, day.

"Ninety days to Portland, boys," he cried as the chorus, rising, echoed over the river, over the town, over the flat lands; awakening men asleep upon lee-boarded luggers by the wharves; awakening pretty women asleep on feathered pillows; awakening eager children; awakening the morning for the dancing of another day.

Upon the breath of a northerly squall a scurry of rain slapped by, the shore lights flickering in the whip of the sea-wind; the morning star dim in the sweep of gray weather; the river, a path to the sea, beginning to shine beneath the opening sky.

From afar up-stream, faint borne upon the morning, came the echoing song of the hands upon another outbound clipper, heaving her anchor in.

The mate of the *Silberhorn*, Egg Martin, a short, stout man—a man of quiet ways and a soft voice, a fellow with a sense of humor, seeing laughter everywhere, a man keeping to himself and attending to his business in his own way, cried—

"A hand to the wheel," and a man ran aft, to the poop; grasping the wheel spokes—the anchor off the harbor mud, the ship gathering way; the shore lights gliding swiftly past—a voice from the shore crying

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good-by to the sea-bound clipper; the ship seeming to take a long breath; her figurehead, a white-robed woman with a long silver horn held to her lips, appearing as if about to blow a call—a call to the people of the sea to come.

The other outbound clipper was coming round the river-bend, her white sides gleaming ghostly in the dawn, her lofty masts and yards white-painted and a-shine; the voices of her crew echoing—the old *Tythonus*, a Bristol clipper; her figurehead an ancient sea-god, a spear held in one hand; a golden trumpet in the other, held to his lips—calling the people of the sea to come.

The ships sped down-stream, day breaking about them; flags all a-flutter at their lofty peaks.

Nearing the river-mouth, the skipper of the four-master crying an order, men hurried aloft; dropping the topsails—the voices of the *Tythonus'* sailors coming over the water, hauling out her topsail sheets; eager to pass the four-master, racing for the open sea.

The crew of the *Silberhorn*, at her topsail halyards, roused a chantey up; Polly Thompson singing in a deep bass voice—a challenge to the white-sided full rigger astern:

"Oh, as I was a-walking down Ratcliffe Highway,
heave away—oh, my Johnnie,
Oh, as I was a-walking down Ratcliffe Highway,
oh, Johnnie, my Johnnie,
A trim little packet I met on my way,
heave away—oh, my Johnnie,
A trim little packet I met on my way,
oh, Johnnie, my Johnnie.
And she said to me, 'Sailorman, sailorman, say,'
heave away—oh, my Johnnie.
And she said to me, 'Sailorman, sailorman, say,'
oh, Johnnie, my Johnnie."

The high white clipper was upon their quarter, her topsails at the mast-heads, racing for the sea, sweeping down upon the long slow-sided gray and black painted bark; the hands running to and fro upon her decks singing the sheets home—shouting taunts to the slip-away old four-mast packet; the *Silberhorn* sending her topgallants away, swinging them to the mast-heads, walking them up, the bow-wash rippling all about her pretty pink forefoot—the full rigger coming down astern steadily; gaining nothing—the sea-god's spear outstretched, his golden trumpet blowing.

"HOW'S' your hands, Alphonse, my son?" asked Polly Thompson, meeting the lad with the yellow hair beside the half-deck door as they went below for dinner.

Alphonse stretched out his hands, palms uppermost; the fingers, the palms, the wrists even, blistered and raw.

"Ze charm—ha, ha," he laughed; a quizzical sort of laugh hiding dismay.

"You'll be all right, son—matter of weeks," said Polly, filling his mouth with a hunk of sea-bread. "O'Brien, are your hands sore?"

O'Brien held them out. No blisters there; hard hands with thick skin on palms and fingers.

Smith looked mournfully at his hands, red and raw; great broken blisters all over them.

"I vish I some vine 'ad—zen ze 'ands I forget," said Alphonse.

"No wine here, son; got to get the guts here, my lad," grinned Polly.

That night the watches were set—the first night out; the second mate, after the custom of ships, taking the ship to sea. The mate would bring her home in days to come.

Alwyn, the second mate, was a large man, well over six feet; a red-headed fellow with immense raw bones and sunken, deep-brown eyes; a fellow with a stubby red beard to whom the apprentices, each and all, took a quick dislike—a dislike that he reciprocated. He was a Yorkshire-man, from Hull; with the gruff voice and blunt accent of the Geordies.

O'Brien and Alphonse went to the second mate's watch.

The second night out Egg Martin went to the skipper; talking with him of the work to be done in the coming days; the scouring and cleaning ship; the painting and the tarring down; and by and by the bending of the light sail aloft.

"I'd like to have you make that big apprentice third mate, sir. He seems to be a good boy," he said.

"He's only an apprentice—not out of his time yet; he'll draw no pay. It might be a good idea," replied the blue-nose skipper.

A trick of the clippers, that—giving a lad all the burden and none of the reward—thereby making hard sailormen for the taking of good ships safely through tight places in the years to come.

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Next morning Egg Martin called Polly aside.

"You're to act third mate, Thompson," he said. "I'm going to leave all I can to you. Responsibility's a fine thing for a lad—gives him guts."

In less than five minutes after Egg Martin had spoken to him Polly was giving orders; the hands staring at him; a boy giving old sailors orders.

"Make it lively—on the hop!" said the son of old Bijah-Bijah Thompson of the colony wool clippers.

They made it on the hop, grinning amongst themselves, growling audibly at times, "to give 'im the guts."

"There's a rattlin' adrift in the main royal rigging, Polly," said O'Brien, meeting him on the main deck that evening.

"Pat, you'll put a 'sir' when you speak to me on deck, son: See?"

"I will like ——! You're only an apprentice."

"You'll put it there or I'll fix it so you will, Pat. Suit yourself. If you want to give the hands a bad example, it's up to you. Your fault when the fur starts flying! See?"

Pat O'Brien saw.

"By ——! I guess you're right, Polly. I'm a stinker, sir."

Polly grinned, his brown eyes full of laughter. At dinner that day Alphonse, sitting in the half-deck, gave him the "sir."

"Cut that 'sir' stuff; we're not on deck, Alphonse, old son. I'm one of the gang in here."

The half-deck held together.

III—DOGS OF THE PACK

WHEN the ship had been a few days at sea it came out that Alwyn, upon his last voyage, had been second mate of a small tramp, that, having been run down and cut in two by one of the Parrot liners, had gone to the bottom, leaving Alwyn struggling in the sea to be picked up with two others of the tramp's small crew—the only survivors.

The apprentices in the half-deck, smoking their pipes in the dog-watch, jested about it.

"Too bad he wasn't drowned—he's no account anyway," said O'Brien.

"I like not ze beeg secon' mate. I teenk e's 'fraid for ze cold vater—vot you say? Ze nerve? Ah, ze nerve! Zat ees eet. *Oui, oui*—ze nerve—ees not zere," said Alphonse.

Egg Martin, on the bridge one night, rubbing a hand through his hair, talking to himself, muttered:

"——! I was cut down on my first voyage; washed overboard the next; five days in an open boat off Stiff when the old Gulf Stream spilled over. Is my nerve busted? ——! I think not!"

Alwyn, jealous of Polly, disliking the apprentices, made life as sorrowful as it lay in his power to do for Alphonse; doing his utmost to torment O'Brien, who, tough as a wire, kept a constant grin upon his lips no matter what blackness was in his heart.

Thirteen days out they overhauled the London ship *Rajore;* signaling her, asking her time out and whither she was bound. And the *Rajore* answered—

"Thirty-three days from Antwerp for Frisco."

Then the *Silberhorn* sent her message; and, disbelieving the bark's signal, the *Rajore* asked to have it repeated and got it again—

"*Silberhorn*, thirteen days, Antwerp to Portland."

They had seen no more of the *Tythonus* after losing her in the channel mists the first night out.

The crew were a mixed lot; some sailors, some merely flying-fish sailors gathered from the slums of North Sea ports and useless save for scrubbing and cleaning ship.

One night, after she had crossed the line and was standing southerly, the weather being dirty, Egg sent Polly to get the kites off her.

Upon the following morning the skipper, coming early on deck, told Alwyn to give her all sail again—the royals of a following ship being just visible over the rim of the sea astern. When the hands went to hoist the jib topsail the sail went aloft in ribbons—blown away as it was hauled down the previous night. The skipper was furious; shouting to Alwyn to know why the sail had not immediately been unbent and replaced. The blame—really at the door of the men who, furling it, had failed to report that it was carried away—was at Polly's door as he was officer in charge when it came in. The night had been a dark one, and none save the men who handled the canvas could have known that it had been ripped.

The skipper stamped savagely to and fro

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upon the poop, muttering to himself; staring forward at the hands bending a new sail.

Alwyn was delighted at Polly's discomfiture; making sneering remarks about third mates which the hands could overhear; the scum of the North Sea ports grinning, fawning upon him—refuse from the hang-outs of Spoor and Man-in-a-Boat Streets.

Polly, saying nothing, went about his business with thin lips: hearing what Alwyn said—waiting with the old patience that comes to young hounds of the old sea's hunting—biding his time.

COMING off the river Plate, the ship met dull weather; the sky overcast, the sea gray and rolling up in long uneasy swells that, lifting her forefoot high, left her to drop with booming crashes to the deep hollows beyond.

There came a night darker than the devil's coal-yard; when no man could see white canvas pressed against his face—a windless night with the gear of the pitching clipper groaning and the wash lapping noisily about her. During the second dog-watch there came a blinding flash of lightning that illumined the whole sea—a limitless expanse of black waters overhung by tumbled curtains of thunder-cloud. Directly under the clipper's forefoot lay a ship; almost within a biscuit toss, but gliding away to leeward, her counter close below the boom-end of the *Silberhorn* as she passed away; her canvas furled—snugged down to lower topsails, awaiting the tempest: her sides, her tapering masts and graceful spars, white painted and shining in the purple flare: an ancient sea-god below her slender boom, leaning above the dark sea, a golden trumpet to his lips as though blowing a call to hunters of the sea.

It was the *Tythonus*.

The blackness of the night was intensified, palpable, a thing to be felt with the bare hands—a solid wall forever enclosing ships upon a lost sea.

A cry rang along the deck of the four-master—

"All hands shorten sail."

It was lost in a clap of thunder which, as if the pillars of heaven had broken from their foundations and were falling upon the sea, trembled the clipper from stern to stern.

The hands swarmed to the deck, making for halyards and downhauls, clew and bunt and leech lines, shouting on the unseen ropes: their voices joined to the groaning of the spars; to the soft rustle of the canvas in the night above.

Another flash of lightning illuming the sea, they saw the Bristol clipper drifting to starboard; the faces of her men peering from her railings into the immensity about them.

The echo of a sailor's laugh came over the water, and the sharp creak of a block as they ran her fore-topmast staysail up. The catch of a chantey chorus rolled across the long swells:

"Sure it's I'll be your true love if only you'll stay,
heave away—oh, my Johnnie.
Sure it's I'll be your true love if only you'll stay,
oh, Johnnie, my Johnnie."

Thunder crashed again, making the clipper quiver. Fin Hansen's voice rang out upon the night, singing on a topgallant leech-line—

"Ee-o-o-o-oh-oh-oh-ho-ho-ho-haul-away-oh, ee-ee-oh—haul-away-oh!"

Topgallants, royals and kites down, mainsail and cross-jack hauled up, the hands started aloft to furl sail; lightning playing incessantly about the ship, thunder pealing overhead.

In the main rigging, a hand on the shroud, stood Polly Thompson, third mate, waiting for the others to go aloft before him, that he might be in the bunt where the heaviest lifting was; raising the great storm mainsail to the spar.

Egg Martin walked the bridge looking away toward the *Tythonus*, a lost and fantom-like ship drifting down a Plutonian sea; no voice borne from any singing sailor's throat, no flap of sail, no whine of slowly rolling tackle-block.

Alwyn, white-faced, recalling the night when the Parrot liner left him struggling in the sea, hung back under the mizzen-shrouds waiting for the men to get aloft; meaning to remain upon the safe footing of the deck—a man with his nerve broken; *a man who had never had the thing called nerve.*

Suddenly—as a peal of thunder died away and silence fell, broken only by the rustle of canvas aloft and the scraping of men's feet upon the rigging—there rang out upon the death-like and mysterious night a shriek—a shriek swift-followed by the bull-like voice of old Fin Hansen, roaring ere yet the falling sailor struck the dark sea's face—

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"Man overboard!"

The lightning, flashing as he cried and as the echo of that wild cry of despair yet rang upon the stillness, showed a hurtling figure falling to the sea beside the scarce-moving vessel.

The night was filled with the loud cries of men, sliding down shrouds and backstays.

The voice of Egg Martin came from the night's void, steady and slow; the voice of an old dog of the cold sea's hunting.

The voice of Polly Thompson, son of old Bijah-Bijah of the wool clippers, rang out—young and defiant of the sea—

"Weather main brace—lay the yard aback—step lively—on the hop!"

The sound of running feet was heard, the hum of voices, the rattle of tackle-blocks, the whine of sheave-pins, as the yards swung round.

Somewhere from the darkness the voice of Alwyn spoke; a voice whose owner knew that were a boat cleared away his place would be with her unless the skipper called for volunteers only; a voice whose owner remembered the night when the tramp was cut down by a Parrot liner—

"Poor ——, he's gone to ——"!

The yards were back, and again the third mate's voice was heard.

"Clear away port quarter boat."

Alwyn's voice, low and clear on the night, spoke from somewhere close to Polly Thompson:

"Ye —— fool! Ye can't put a boat out tonight."

The voice of the blue-nose skipper came from the bridge, distinct and cold-cut; each man staying to harken to what his captain said.

"Volunteers only. If a boat goes, men—she may not come back."

The boat was dropping to the water, men leaping into her as she passed the rails—Tom Swift, Fin Hansen, old man Sinclair, the father of the fo'csle, and last of all young Pat O'Brien.

Brushing past Polly, he spoke—

"——! Polly—it's Alphonse."

"Get back to the deck," said Polly Thompson; and, staring at him, O'Brien leaped back to the deck; Bijah Thompson's son knowing full well that tonight was a night of gray hunting for the strongest dogs of the sea's old pack.

A foremast-hand took O'Brien's place; the third mate, an eager volunteer where his superiors hung back, leaping after him, dropping nimbled-footed to the boat, crying as he fell:

"Give way, men. Make it lively."

The boat was gone; leaping to the lift of the high swells; her oarsmen swaying to and fro, to and fro, to and fro, back and forth, back and forth; the oars swinging with a ceaseless rhythm in perfect time together.

"Give way, lads; let her go," said Polly Thompson, standing in the stern sheets; the yoke-ropes in his big hands.

Clank, clank—clank, clank—clank, clank—from the rowlocks and the long swing of the backs of the dogs of the gray sea's hunting-pack.

The ship was fading in the distance; illumined now and again by the flashes of the passing thunder-storm; the night about them black, the sea black, the world a void.

They sped on, over the ridges, over the long hollows, swinging ceaselessly to and fro, to and fro—hunters of the sea.

A flash of lightning came, terrific, appalling, insistent; lighting the world of sea and sky—showing, far off upon the horizon, a long, low wall of utter darkness arising from the rim of the sea.

In the rigging of the bark a lantern waved wildly, to and fro, up and down—signaling to the boat.

Above the clank of the rowlocks Polly Thompson's voice spoke—

"The ship is signaling to us to return, men."

A face looked up. a row of faces—faces of the hunters of the sea—the eyes of old Fin Hansen, the stroke oarsman, looking straight into the eyes of the son of Bijah-Bijah Thompson.

From the ship the lantern waved frantically, to and fro, up and down; swinging in a red arc in the mizzen-rigging.

A smile, youthful, defiant, delighted, swept over the lips of the third mate of the clipper *Silberhorn*.

"Give way, lads. Let her have it."

The lightning, fainter now as the thunder-clouds rolled away down the path of the approaching *pampero*, showed a black band swiftly rising from the sea rim; overspreading sea and sky; obliterating all things.

From somewhere in the night a voice cried, and, hearing it, Polly shouted—

"Back water, men—lively!"

His hands to his lips, Polly shouted—again, and again. By the pale flare of a

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distant flash a face appeared beside the boat, an outstretched arm, a hand that, rising, grasped the gunwale. A form, wet and gasping, hove itself over the gunwale and lay prostrate in the stern sheets at the feet of Polly.

The tempest was sweeping toward them; darker and darker by the dying lightning flares. The boat leaped across the ridges, swung through the hollows toward the ship whence the lantern was wildly beckoning.

From the bottom of the boat a voice spoke, a voice with the ring of youth; with the growl of a young hound of the pack.

"Ze charm, ze charm—I azzure," it said.

"Grab an oar, you little blighter, and lay back," said old Bijah's son.

Alphonse, dripping, still gasping for breath, grabbed an oar and lay back, swinging to the rhythm of the other rowers.

The storm, a river Plate *pampero*, sweeping from the vast pampas, was fast approaching; the sea hushed, as if expectant and waiting a mighty blow. The rain commenced to fall, drenching the rowers, hissing upon the sea.

A moment more and the boat swung under the side of the ship; men hurriedly hooking the falls; a voice from the rail counting slowly, tensely; faces beside the counter listening eagerly to each count—

"One, two, three, four, five, *six*—thank Gawd!"

A sigh of relief, a gasp, a long-drawn breath arose from the gathered sailors, as, seizing the boat-falls, they hauled her to her place upon the skids.

"Stand by topsail halyards! All hands keep handy."

The *pampero* smote upon her, from a bank of Plutonic night, with a deafening roar; sprays driving in sheets across her, the sea moaning, spars and masts and ropes creaking wildly for an instant till, tight in the fury of the tempest, each was rigid and voiceless.

As the *pampero* caught her Alwyn, reaching into the mizzen-rigging, took the lantern down; holding it up, opening its little door to blow it out. As he stood, his face beside the lantern, the first breath of the wind flickering its flame, he was aware of a man who, coming close up to him, peered a moment into his face and then with cool deliberation spat straight into his eyes.

The wind whipped the lantern flame out; Alwyn, steadying himself against the rail, staring at the dim shape of a receding figure, unable to see who it had been.

Fin Hansen, the sewer of torn sails, had turned upon his heel and hastened away to the topsail-downhauls.

IV—MULLIGAN'S RUNNERS

FROM the night when Alphonse went overboard Alwyn's dislike for him, as well as for Polly Thompson, was intensified. Whether he actually knew who it was that had spat in his face would be hard to say—whether indeed, at times, while thinking over the incident, he was but half certain that such a thing had actually taken place might be questioned.

Fin Hansen, sitting day by day at his seat beside the main hatch, stitching away at the sails, kept his own counsel.

The night that Polly picked Alphonse up, the lad, coming to him in the half-deck, smiling up into his face, laying his hands upon Polly's shoulders said:

"Ah, ze so nice girl, zat Polly—you see! Zum day I make ze pay of ze debt."

Polly, laughing, replied:

"All right, Frenchy old son. A bottle of Moët and Chandon when she pulls into the African dock next, will about square things; eh?"

The *Silberhorn* made the run to Portland in a hundred and twelve days; and two weeks later, while she still lay at her moorings in the river awaiting a discharging-berth, the *Tythonus* glided to anchorage astern of her; rust-stained, her numbers fluttering lazily at her peak, even the sea-god beneath her boom appearing on that foggy morning as though aweary of the chill sea weather.

The river was full of ships from Europe—Hamburg, Genoa, Antwerp, Liverpool, London, Greenock—each in a hurry to discharge and to load for sea again.

To the red anger of the skipper of the *Silberhorn*, three days after the *Tythonus* came to port she towed into a discharging-berth; leaving the four-master lying idly at her river-moorings. But for all his wrath it was yet another five days before the *Silberhorn* went to a berth at the wharves, below the swinging bridge; the result of the delay being that the *Tythonus* was discharged, loaded and cleared for sea, lying at the river-moorings again, while the bark was not yet ready for her outward cargo.

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Owing to big wages ashore, as well as to the large number of ships in the stream, sailors were scarce along the Columbia; with the result that the *Tythonus*, cleared and ready for sea, was hung up at her moorings awaiting a full crew.

Along the Columbia there was but one sailor's boarding-master, Larry Sullivan; a cold-blooded robber, fast becoming wealthy by his deviltries amongst the sailors; owning a house in Astoria as well as one in Portland; keeping his two runners constantly busy at his dirty work of shanghaiing sailormen; wheedling them from their ships with tales of fancy money alongshore; selling them by ship-loads to sea-hungry skippers, impatient of delay, as soon as their ships were cleared for sea.

Twice, before the *Silberhorn* went to her berth, Pete Lazukos boarded her; stealing off to her by night to tempt her hands away. He came a third time accompanied by Tony Grant, confident of returning with a boat-load of deserting sailors.

As he climbed up the rope that hung over the ship's side, in the forerigging, Egg Martin, chancing to be forward and hearing his shoes scraping on the ship's side, peered over the rail. Quietly taking the rope off its pin, he let it drop. Lazukos, afraid of the water, screamed; his scream dying in a smothered gurgle as he disappeared in the dark river. Rising from the cold stream, scrambling into his boat, cursing, he muttered of revenge.

"Shut your trap, you fool," said Tony Grant. "Why in —— don't you get wise and learn to swim, you poor rat, you?"

Crouching in the boat they listened, waiting to see if any one would appear at the railing; thinking that after all it might have been an accident caused by Lazukos taking hold of a loose rope.

As they crouched, Lazukos shivering, cursing under his breath, swearing to cut the liver out of every deep-water sailor that he could fill with doped drink from that night on, a head appeared over the rail; and as, thinking it to be a fo'csle hand ready to desert the ship and go ashore with them, they grinned up into the gloom above them, from which the head stood outlined against the shrouds, Egg Martin's voice spoke—

"Next time any of you fellows try to board this ship I'll fix you, see?"

In silence, cursing under their breath, they pulled ashore.

THE following evening, Alphonse, strolling ashore with Pat O'Brien, passing the end of the warehouse, was aware of men talking in low tones in the shadows beside the board-walk. Alphonse had grown a cool head since the day he first came aboard the ship.

"Vait, Pat," he said. "Vait till I get out of ze wind. I vill be wiz you in a minute."

Stepping aside from the board-walk, he struck a match, holding it to his pipe.

"Ze —— vind," he muttered, and, stepping back to the board-walk, thrust his hands deep in his pockets and followed O'Brien.

He had seen what he looked for—two men who squatted, hidden under the side of the grain-shed. He had heard part of one sentence, in a broken tongue.

"Ze bigger ze better—zat ees how zey vish for ze *Tythonus*."

He had caught the sound of a soft, sneering laugh that he had learned to know upon the sea-roads round the Horn to Oregon — the laugh of Alwyn.

THE next evening Polly Thompson, meaning to take in a theater and to spend an evening by himself—a habit of his—took a stroll ashore. He was a lad who could be perfectly happy wandering around by himself.

Passing the Thetis Saloon, a place near to the end of Fourth Street, on his direct way up-town, a place where Larry Mulligan had one of his main hang-outs, owning the greater part of the business himself, he saw, as he turned the street corner, Alwyn leaning against the wall of the place, lighting his pipe—evidently ashore by himself; spending the evening in his chosen manner.

Polly, giving him a nod, would have passed on; but as he neared him, Alwyn, looking up and seeing a shipmate, spoke.

Alwyn, when he chose so to be, was possessed of a soft-spoken, friendly voice—the sort of voice to deceive any but an old hand amongst men. And now as Polly Thompson approached he made full use of all his Geordie suavity; speaking in soft Yorkshire accents, as if there had never been anything other than the best of good feeling between the two of them.

"Ove a drink wi' me; will 'ee, lod? C'mon in, eh? Let's you an me 'ove one together," he said.

After a long voyage round the Horn,

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cooped up aboard ship, sailors coming ashore are given to forgetting all misunderstandings of the passage, remembering only the brotherhood of the sea, binding them in bonds of comradeship.

Polly, hearing the soft accents of the second mate, thought upon the instant that he had perhaps misjudged the fellow—misjudgments are easy enough. What evidence had he ever had that Alwyn had ever been anything but a good shipmate? What was a bit of rough horseplay? Why, nothing at all, of course! He, Polly Thompson, had been a stuck-up fool! And with a burst of friendship toward the man who though a coward was yet a shipmate, accepting the hand of friendship, he entered the Thetis at his side. Side by side they leaned upon the bar, watching the bartender getting their drinks—feuds and foolish quarrels of the hard old sea forgotten.

Pete Lazukos, grinning into Polly's eyes, placed two bottles on the bright shiny bar: Polly, trying to grin back at him, taking a queer feeling through his system at the light in the dago fellow's eyes; a suspicion, an intangible quiver of distrust creeping through his bones; making him look hard at the bottle before him; realizing that this was a hang-out of Mulligan the boarding-master's. He had heard the foremast hands, scraping the rust from the plates over her side, talking of the place that very day; jesting of men carried out from the place unconscious, doped—packed off to ships awaiting their crews.

"Dreenk 'eem oop—'ee's plenty more lak' 'eem," said Lazukos, leering at the face of the young third mate.

Polly looked at the bottle, and, realizing that that one at least was safe, put it to his lips.

"Here's luck to you, Alwyn—a pleasant passage eastward; eh?" he said.

"Aye, m'lod, 'ere's look to 'ee—'ere's to as foine a bully roon east as ever 'ee seed, m'lod!" cried Alwyn, nodding to him, holding high the bottle; looking from the far corner of his brown eye at the face of the dago fellow behind the bar.

Polly, drinking the ale, placed the bottle on the bar.

"Ze boy 'e feel ze glasses now? Ze boy stand ze dreenks now; eh?" smiled the dago; and Polly, knowing that it would but arouse suspicion for him to back down upon his plain due to the other, said:

"Yes—a couple more bottles; look alive. I'm in a hurry."

"Een hurry, eh? Ees not goot to be een hurry—ees better go slow—den maybe you get vare you start to go; eh?" said the dago, grinning at him.

Again Polly drank; imported liquor, plainly not tampered with.

"I lak you try thees, meester—thees fine dreenk for sailor, I tell you meester; see?" said Lazukos, placing a long black bottle upon the bar and filling glasses for the two men.

He filled a glass for himself.

"I dreenk on ze boss. Ze boss 'e no care, see? 'Ee's goot boss," he said, lifting his liquor.

Polly watched him; watching his slim fingers, watching his long sleeves, his wrists, his elbows, his snake-like eyes; listening to the slime that dripped from his tongue. Alwyn, nudging Polly, drawing him aside.

"Say, see 'ere, sonny, me boy, zum day the boss'll get wise to that there yellow-belly an' kick 'im out o' the place; eh?" he said, holding Polly's eye to his own.

Polly laughed; laughing naturally; reaching toward where he had left the tall glass of dark liquor; meeting for the smallest fraction of a second a thin finger withdrawing itself from the bar.

"Well, 'ere goes, shipmate! 'Ere's to a booly roon 'ome, eh?" said Alwyn, raising his glass, sipping at the dark contents, smiling at Polly, at the son of tough old captain Bijah-Bijah Thompson; remembering some one who, upon a dark night far at sea, had spat in his face; remembering that it had been a stooped man whose face he could not see; that it had been by a murky lantern's flicker as the flame blew out.

"Vy you no dreenk, meester? 'Ee's goot dreenk, I tell you—'ee's to make grow ze 'air on ze chest," laughed the dago fellow, tossing his liquor down, licking his lips; sweeping an arm along the bright bar; wiping the spilt drops of liquor from it; looking—inquiringly, Polly Thompson thought—at the face of Alwyn.

There was a sound at the door, a shutting away of the light, a creaking; and Polly, looking about, saw that two men had entered. One was a short squat negro; a thick-lipped muscular brute whom Polly had seen before—in a boat, he thought—a boat that came off to the ship as she lay at the river-moorings; pulling an oar, rowing Larry Mulligan himself aboard to speak to the skipper

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—the skipper telling them both to clear out.

The other was a sandy-haired, lean-faced, slouching fellow with fingers that appeared to cling; feet that appeared to glide rather than to walk across the floor; eyes that met no other man's eye; lips so thin as to be all but invisible; a narrow-headed man with scanty short hair; a toothpick stuck between his lips.

They were shutting the outside door—not the swinging doors to the barroom, but the heavy doors that were shut when the place was closed for the night.

Polly Thompson realized in a flash that he was trapped. The doors were shut; the iron cleats in place; the window-shutters closed.

"Vy you no dreenk? 'Ee's goot dreenk, I tell you, meester," said the voice of the dago at his side.

Polly stepped back—one swift long stride that brought his back against the wall; his large hand closing as he did so about the glass of liquor before him; his long arm drawn back, sending it with a swing straight at the face of Alwyn.

An instant and they were at him; the negro at his legs, wrenching to drag them from the wall; Alwyn, sure of revenge at last, springing with a cut and dripping face for Polly's throat—meeting a huge, hard fist that, stopping his mad rush, dropped him to one knee for a moment. Lazukos, vaulting the shiny bar, had gripped one arm, clinging to it like a leech.

Tony Grant had grasped the arm that had stopped Alwyn in his first rush. Polly feeling that his legs were about to go from under him, feeling the odds heavy, unable to strike, unable even to kick, struggling fiercely against impossible odds, saw a new face and heard a new voice speak above the noise of the struggle—the voice of Larry Mulligan himself, cold, hard, rasping:

"Knock him over the head. What in —— are you fooling this way for, eh?"

He saw the arm of Mulligan upraised, a heavy bottle in his hand, and, almost sensing the approach of the bottle as it flew toward his forehead, saw the head of Mulligan jerked swiftly backward.

The flying bottle, leaving Mulligan's hand as he reeled backward, missed its mark; striking Alwyn full upon the back of his head and sending him staggering over the kneeling negro and lurching into Tony Grant, who let go Polly's right arm.

That right arm flew out, straight, unerring, strong; meeting the uplifted chin of Alwyn as, rising, he rushed again at Polly's throat. There was five months of patient waiting behind that blow; and Alwyn, reeling, dazed, senseless, fell in a crumpled heap upon the floor.

The negro, two ribs cracked from a swift kick well placed as he let go the third mate's legs under the weight of Alwyn falling over him, lay groaning and writhing, clawing at the unconscious form of the senseless second mate.

The fight was even. A laugh, short, ringing, deep, rang from the throat of Bijah Thompson's son as with one swing and another he drove the two runners driveling against the bar, whimpering and crying for mercy.

Beside the bar stood a lad with a shock of yellow hair and large, shining, blue eyes who, unable to get tidings to any of his half-deck comrades had cheerfully sailed into any odds to pay his debt—if payment can be made with less than life for life saved from the night's dark and who now, a gun in his hand, complacently covered Larry Mulligan.

"A bit of harmless fun, boys—no harm done—just a little lark; eh?" cried Mulligan, stretching a hand to Alphonse, smiling to him; motioning the gun away; the gun staying, pointing directly at his face.

"Put it away, boy. We'll have the cops bothering us," he said, still smiling, still passing the whole thing off as he had many a time passed off a half-finished fight to his advantage, securing his victim by the slime upon his tongue.

"I'll trouble you for that bottle that Lazukos thinks so highly of," said Polly; adding—

"Get it—get it *on the hop*."

Mulligan got it, whimpering now and yet half-hoping that here perhaps was a loophole—that Polly was actually going to take a drink.

Polly Thompson drew out the cork, filling a glass with the dark liquor.

"Drink that—drink it *on the hop*. I've no time to waste," he said.

Mulligan, meeting the third mate's eye, the eye of old Bijah-Bijah Thompson's son, drank it, falling a moment later in a stupid heap upon the floor.

"Alphonse, we'll give 'em all a tot. Come along, old son—step lively," he said.

Together they went from one to the other

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of the gang, forcing their lips apart; forcing the dark liquor down their unwilling throats; leaving them lying senseless and stupefied, sprawled about the floor.

"Alphonse, how fast can you get to the ship and back, son? Go fetch O'Brien and Smith—on the hop; eh?"

"Aye, aye, sir. Ze charm, ze charm—I azzure," and Alphonse, yet speaking, was gone.

TAKING them to the riverside, they loaded them into Larry Mulligan's boat; heaping them in one on top of another.

Polly Thompson took the yoke-ropes, the other three the oars; and away, under the crescent moon, to the mid-river moorings, they pulled their freight.

Coming under the side of the Bristol clipper, Polly Thompson hailed her; crying softly, not too anxious to awaken folk.

"*Tythonus, ahoy!*"

And while awaiting an answer he whispered to his shipmates:

"Here's where the *Tythonus* gets some no-good foremast-hands. I think Mr. P. Thompson goes home with a provisional second mate's ticket, what? Who gets us our crew, I wonder? We don't want any things like these apologies for men."

A head appeared over the clipper's railing—the head of the nightwatchman.

"Go tell your mate Mulligan's runners are here with the rest of your crew," said Polly.

In a few moments another head appeared.

"Get those lubbers aboard. ——, don't you have any more sense than to wake a fellow up?"

The head disappeared; footsteps receding along the deck.

Polly and Alphonse, swarming over the side, dropping nimble-footed to the clipper's crescent-lighted deck, tossed a rope's end to the other two.

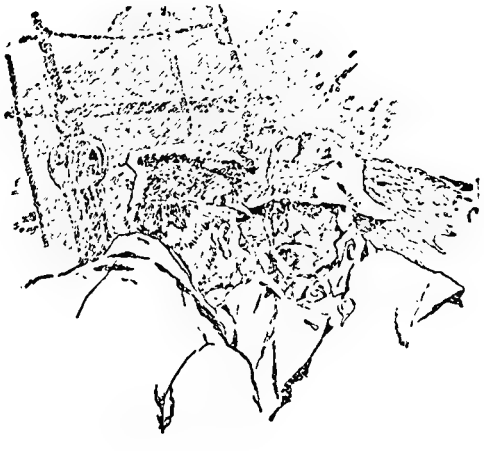
One by one they hauled them aboard, dumping them on the deck, dragging them into the dark fo'csle, tumbling them into the spare bunks.

One by one, again they forced their lips apart; and once more gave them a shot from Pete Lazukos' favorite bottle.

BEFORE dawn streaked the sky Polly Thompson, awaking in his bunk aboard the *Silberhorn*, listened to a chantey chorus echoing over the sleepy river—to the musical clank, clank, clank of a clipper's windlass pawls—to the lap about the forefoot of a seaward-going ship.

Rolling over, burying his head under the blankets, he murmured to himself as he thought of the Belgian—

"Ze charm, ze charm—I azzure."



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The MAN-HUNTERS

by L. A. Wells

Author of "Below the Mark," "The Weak Spot," etc.

ED LOVE and Jim Hart reined up their horses before the Starlight Saloon at Eagle, Texas. Both men punched cows for old man Henry Stovall, owner of the Zee-Jay Ranch, twelve miles east of Eagle. The Spring roundup was ranch history and Sam Corey, Stovall's ranch foreman, was giving the twenty odd men who worked for the ranch vacations of a week each, letting them go in pairs. As ham goes with eggs so did Ed Love and Jim Hart go together.

"Ain't I seen this place before?" asked Love innocently, studying the sign over the door of the saloon.

"If my nose ain't lyin' I s'pect she's a drink-parlor, Ed," the other answered. "Le's go in an' see."

They dismounted and tied their horses to the rack and went in. The saloon was deserted save for "Baldy" Moore, the bartender, who was perched on a high lookout stool behind the bar reading a paper he held in his hands.

"You danged tanglefoot houn's back here a'ready?" Moore hailed his prospective customers. "You-all ain't been departed herefrom three hours yit."

"We hones for yore comp'ny, Baldy, so we ambles back," replied Love.

The two friends lined up at the bar, and Moore set out a bottle and two glasses. They drank and Love paid the score from the meager funds in his pocket. They had left the ranch with three hundred dollars between them. What with four days and nights of gambling and drinking, however, they were nearly broke.

"When you two *hombres* prances in I'm a-thinkin' about yuh," said Moore as he replaced the bottle on the shelf behind him.

"What for?" asked Hart.

Moore slapped the paper he had been reading on the bar and smoothed it with a pair of ham-like hands.

"See that?" he said. "That paper spells easy money for some gent or gents what's got sand."

"How much easy money, Mr. Moore?" from Love.

"One thousand simoleons."

The dull faces of the two friends brightened with interest and they sent each other avaricious glances.

"That shore is a pile o' *dinero*, ain't it?" mused Hart.

"Say a gent calculates to win that money, Baldy?" said Love.

"This here paper," explained the bartender, "comes direct from Austin an' she's signed by the gov'ner. If yuh keeps up with the gossip a-goin' 'round you-all knows about a certain party what's been stickin' up stages an' cuttin' up didoes thataway 'round here recent."

"Does yuh refer to that ornery renegade they calls 'Apache' Pete?" put in Hart.

"I does, but he ain't no redskin none a-tall," replied Moore. "He's a white man 'ceptin' his heart, which that organ's plumb black."

"I meets up with that gent personal one

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time about two year ago, which then he ain't no more 'n cut his eye teeth on this bad-man racket," volunteered Love.

"He's mentioned in this dockyment as now plumb unlawful," went on Moore. "Therefore the gov'ner is offerin' one thousand simoleons for the body of Apache Pete dead or alive."

"An' yuh calls that easy money," said Hart cynically.

"Does the gent what plays sheriff to this county know about that there paper, Moore?" asked Love.

"It's Billy hisself gives me this paper last night an' tells me he gits mebbe it's a dozen by stage from Austin yisterday," answered the bartender. "It's while I'm a-lookin' it over agin afore I tacks it on the wall yonder I thinks o' you' an' Jim."

"Which mebbe yuh mean me an' Ed bids for the job runnin' that Apache Pete gent to his hole?" Hart said.

"I don't mean nothin' else," was the answer.

During the space of silence that followed Moore wiped the bar with a towel, Hart rolled and lit a cigaret, and Love rubbed his chin and cheek reflectively. Finally Hart spoke.

"Ed," he said, "does I express yore sen'iments when I says we goes beggin' on the streets of Eagle before we satiates out with the idea roundin' up that Apache Pete?"

"Which yuh shorely does," replied Love emphatically. "I rides hosses what ain't never felt leather before, an' one time I wades into a passel o' plumb angry Mexicans with no more weapon 'n a cinch-strap; but I ain't foolhardy enough to go gunnin' for a gent which he's got eight notches on his six-gun. When I commits suicide I does it personal."

"Ed's a-tellin' yuh for me too, Baldy," said Hart. "Apache Pete jest starts operatin' in our backyard recent, so to speak, but I hears a plenty about him previous. He's plumb dangerous. I don't want nothin' a-tall to do with no gent like him, which I'm aimin' to live till my whiskers gits in the way o' my feet."

"That's a wise decision, sonny," approved Love patronizingly. "Therefore, me an' you losin' a thousand dollars sudden thataway, Jim, I suggests to our friend the barkeep he set out that bottle agin so as we can pickle our sorrows in drink."

The bottle was forthwith shifted from shelf to bar and all three men had a drink, Love paying the score as before.

"I reckon I don't blame you-all none a-tall for them sen'iments," said Moore, clearing the bar.

"What's Billy say about it?" asked Hart, loath to let drop a subject concerning so much money. "Seems to me him bein' sheriff thataway he'd try to rustle Apache Pete hisself."

"Which Billy shorely has ambitions along them lines," answered the bartender. "When he's in here last night he tells me private he figgers that bandit's loiterin' somewheres in the Diablos, an' early this mornin' he saddles up an' rides down that way to have a look at them hills."

"Billy ain't got much head for figgerin'," Hart said. "Didn't this Apache Pete party stick up the stage at Johnson's ford up north o' here jest two weeks ago an' git away with ten thousand dollars?"

"Up to date that's his last dido," said Moore.

"An' if he had any sense would he go traipsin' all the way down to the Diablos to hide when he could jest as well ride into the Guadalupes only a little piece away an' hide out jest as well?"

"Didn't I tell Billy that very thing?" said Moore. "I shorely did. But Billy he says that bandit don't aim to hang 'round near the scene o' his last crime, which therefore he lopes south so as he can be near the border an' git over to Mexico on short notice. But I lay yuh five to one Apache Pete's restin' easy up there somewheres in the north end o' the Guadalupes. Ain't no better place to hide in. I'm tellin' yuh, gents."

Love grunted.

"No sense wastin' yore wind talkin' about it, nohow," he said. "I done lost all interest in that thousand dollars, an' while I hopes somebody wins that *dinero* I stands here an' names a gent what ain't ever goin' to see one penny of it. Which his name's Ed Love. An' so sayin', I hereby declares this here vacation me an' Jim's takin' is all sagged down for want o' money to keep her a-goin', which I rides back to the old Zee-Jay a disappointed man."

"Yuh ain't a-goin' home, Ed?" asked Hart with evident surprize.

"Man without no money is shorely like a bird without no wings—he can't fly none a-tall," answered Love in disgust. "Does I

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git yore honorable company back, Jim, or does yuh remain here in Eagle an' beg yore friends for the price o' food an' drink?"

"You-all returns alone, Ed, which she busts my heart wide open to have yuh depart thataway," returned Hart mournfully.

"Then I bids you-all *adios*," said Love.

He went out and mounted his horse and cantered away toward the east and the Zee-Jay ranch. Hart stood in the doorway of the saloon and watched his friend until both horse and rider had been swallowed by the distance, then he went back to the bar and gazed meditatively at his reflection in the big mirror behind the bar. Moore looked at him curiously a few moments, then said—

"What yuh got on yore mind, Jim?"

"A thousand dollars," answered Hart.

"Apache Pete?"

"Shorely."

"Didn't I hear yuh tell Ed——"

"What I says an' what I thinks is sometimes diff'rent, Mr. Moore," cut in Hart. "If I'd of told Ed I pines to capture Apache Pete an' win that thousand dollars I reckon he would of hog-tied me, which then I don't go after that bandit none a-tall. The way Ed treats me you'd think I was a little boy an' he was my daddy. I git plumb riled at him sometimes. He wouldn't aim to have me all shot up by no ornery bandit thataway now. But him figgerin' to return back to the ranch I don't see no hinderance me tryin' to put my personal brand on to that one thousand pesos."

"I shorely wishes yuh luck," said the bartender.

"If that Apache Pete's what he's cracked up to be I'm a-goin' to need luck," remarked Hart feelingly. "But now I'll be ridin' along up to the Guadalupes, Baldy, an' I'll thank yuh kind-i-ly to keep this little jamboree o' mine under yore hair. Ed'd raise —— if he knowed about it. *Adios*."

TWO hours' steady riding at an easy gait brought Hart to the edge of the Guadalupe Range. To the best of his knowledge and belief, somewhere in that jumbled mass of hills was Apache Pete, a man who wore a six-gun with eight notches in the butt, each notch supposed to represent the taking of a human life. Before Hart loomed the entrance of a cañon. He pulled the .38 Winchester from the saddle scabbard, clucked to his horse and rode on.

Three o'clock came. Hart had by that time worked his way deep into the hills. Now he was perched upon the rim of Paso Grande cañon, the deepest and widest cañon of them all. He lay nestled in a small clearing in the brush with which both rims of the cañon were lined. For the past ten or fifteen minutes he had been searching with keen eyes the bottom and sides of the cañon. But not a thing that bore the remotest resemblance to a man did he see.

He put up his head a little to extend his range of vision. The next instant his hat flew from his head as if it were controlled by a wire operated by some one concealed in the brush at his rear. Followed the echoing crack of a rifle. Instinctively he threw himself flat on his face. Though he had missed death by the width of a few hairs he was jubilant.

"There, dang yuh, I reckon I flushed yuh that time!" he exclaimed. "An' yore worth a thousand simoleons to me, Mr. Apache Pete, dead or alive."

For a little while Hart lay as still as a dead mouse, then hearing nothing he parted the bushes before his face. Not a thing escaped his sharp eyes as he searched the cañon before him. That the shot had come from the cañon he was certain; his hat had been knocked away from and not toward the cañon. But his keen-eyed searching availed him nothing.

He let the bushes come softly back into place and wormed his way to where his hat lay. When he picked it up and looked at it he whistled through his teeth. The high crown of the hat was bullet-pierced on both sides just above the snake-skin band.

"The shootin' son-of-a-gun!" Hart ejaculated with a hint of admiration in his voice. "Shore is livin' up to his reputation. Two inches lower an' she would of busted clean through my head."

An idea seized him. He crawled back to where he had come from and held the hat in the position it had occupied on his head before the shot had been fired. Then by extending an imaginary line between the two holes in the crown of his hat into space he was able to approximate the spot from whence the shot had been fired.

"Jest about a hundred feet to the left o' that oak," he decided. "Lemme see."

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He found a detached dead limb and placed the hat upon one end of it. Then ducking behind a convenient rock he held the hat four or five feet above his head. It was a trick as old as the hills and it worked admirably.

In a moment the hat went flying, two more holes piercing its crown. Hart swore and peeped around one side of the rock. On the opposite rim of the cañon, within a dozen feet of where he had calculated his unseen foe to be lurking, he thought he detected a thin wisp of smoke vanishing into the clear air.

Swiftly he lined the sights of his rifle upon the spot and fired. He could not tell at that distance, all of four hundred feet, where his bullet struck; but he had enough confidence in his marksmanship to believe that even if the bullet had not found its true mark the man on the other rim of the cañon would know that he had been shot at.

His own shot was followed in a few seconds by one from the enemy. He was peeping from one side of his breastwork at the time and saw by the spurt of smoke across the cañon that he had aimed too far to the right. The other man, however, had shot more accurately, his bullet chipping a piece from the top of the rock behind which Hart lay.

"Huh!" grunted Hart. "Reckon I'll be movin'."

He got his hat, and on hands and knees and dragging his rifle after him began crawling through the bushes toward the left along the rim of the cañon. When he had gone about fifty yards he stopped. He found another rock and crouched behind it, then shoved his rifle through a rift in the bushes.

He sighted carefully at the spot where he had seen the last puff of smoke across the cañon and pulled the trigger. Before the reverberations of his shot ceased a bullet whined over his head and a small branch, neatly clipped from a bush, fell before his face.

"Yuh shootin' fool!" he cried.

He noted, ruefully, that the last shot from the opposite rim of the cañon had come from a bush all of fifty yards to the left, as seen from his side of the cañon, of where it had come before. Which was evidence enough that the foe had employed the same tactics of a changing base as Hart.

"All right, yuh mind-readin' fool, I'll go back again an' see how she pans out."

Hart crawled warily back to his original position. From there he fired again, aiming at the spot where the last spurt of smoke had been seen. His shot was answered from a point perhaps twenty yards to the right of where he had aimed and he plainly heard the bullet as it sang past.

He swore and pumped a fresh cartridge from magazine to chamber of his rifle. He fired without changing position, careful to keep behind his protecting rock. His shot was answered at once. Then followed a fusillade from both sides, shot following shot as fast as the two men could pump their rifles. The cañon roared and boomed. In a short time Hart's rifle was empty.

"Wait till I git my musket loaded agin, Mr. Apache Pete, an' we continues this shoot-fest," he said with a grin. "Yore shootin' so fast I reckon yore usin' a repeater too."

He plucked cartridges from his belt and reloaded the magazine of his rifle as fast as nimble fingers could. The other man was probably reloading also, for there was an interval of quiet. Then the shooting began afresh, though now with more care. Back and forth along the rim of the cañon Hart crawled, changing position after each shot. The enemy did likewise.

Hart speculated upon the chance of climbing down the side of the cañon, across the bottom and up the other side to stalk the enemy at close range, but gave up the idea at once. In the first place the sides of the cañon were entirely too sheer for safe climbing, and in the next place there was no adequate concealment. If he did not fall from the steep side of the cañon himself he would be shot off by the foe on the other side. All he could do was remain where he was and bang away, trusting to a chance shot to bring his quarry down.

The sun, taking no notice of the bush-whacking warfare that was going on millions of miles away, gradually declined, turning blood-red as it did so.

But there was no pause in the duel between Hart and his foe. And though both of them did some remarkably good shooting Hart was untouched save for the four holes in his hat, and judging from the continuation of the fire from the other side of the cañon his opponent was also uninjured.

"Looks like I ain't a-goin' to shoot myself

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into that thousand simoleons 'less I git more luck," Hart complained. "Never seen sech a stubborn *hombre* as him. Why don't he go dead so I can collect?"

Hart chuckled to himself. What had at first given promise of ending in tragedy had developed into comedy. He wondered what Ed Love would say to his shooting it out with Apache Pete that way across Paso Grande Cañon. Love would probably take him across his knee and give him a sound spanking for his rashness.

"But if that danged barkeep don't shoot off his lip none Ed ain't never goin' to know about this," Hart assured himself. "Of course if I pots that renegade an' wins that thousand dollars Ed'll shorely want to know where at I git the money. Then I tells him I win it playin' faro after he went."

Presently the sun sank behind the Guadaloupe peaks and twilight came on. Hart glanced at the cheap watch he carried. He had been on the rim of the cañon since one o'clock. And in all that time he had not caught the slightest glimpse of his enemy across the way. Nor, as far as he knew, had the enemy caught a glimpse of him. That he was still alive was sufficient evidence of that fact.

"Well, I reckon I'll have to bid you-all *adios*, Mr. Pete," Hart said at length. "It's comin' on dark right smart an' I'd be a danged fool to night it here an' mebbe drop off to sleep an' let yuh crawl up on me an' knock me plumb off thataway. So I hereby calls it a day an' ambles back to Eagle, which I'll shorely come up here agin tomorrow an' hunt yuh some more. Here's *adios* to yuh."

He sent a bullet zwinging across the cañon and immediately received one in return. Apache Pete was evidently still on the job and breathing freely. Hart laughed and crawled back from the rim of the cañon until he thought it safe to rise to his feet, then he hurried on to where he had left his horse tied a hundred yards or so away.

It was dark when he reached Eagle. As he rode down the main street past the Starlight Saloon sounds of carousal came to his ears. But he was a tired man and the saloon failed to lure him. He put his horse away in the corral at the end of the street; then came back to the hotel and went to bed at once.

The sun was well up when he wakened next morning. He jumped out of bed and looked at his watch. It was almost nine o'clock and he swore at himself for being a sleepy-headed loafer.

"Danged fool!" he berated himself as he hurried into his clothes. "Thousand dollars up there in them hills waitin' to be collected an' here's you snorin' away like yuh got a year to collect it. Better go lopin' up there before that Apache Pete gits tired waitin' an' moves."

He swallowed a hasty breakfast, got his saddle and bridle from the hotel office and went down to the corral for his horse. At the corral he got a surprize. Among the dozen or so horses in the corral was one that he recognized instantly. It was a black horse with three white boots and a white star on the forehead.

"Ed's Blackie!" he ejaculated.

He looked at the horse in wonder. The presence of Ed Love's horse in the corral indicated but one thing: Love had for some reason or other changed his mind about going to the ranch and had returned to Eagle.

"Huh!" said Hart.

He went back up the street without his horse, left bridle and saddle at the hotel, then passed on to the Starlight Saloon. He was not surprized to find Ed Love at the saloon talking with Baldy Moore.

Yet he was surprized in one respect. Ed Love wore a bandage about his head, and just above the right temple was a spot that looked very much like a blood stain. Hart shook hands with his friend and gravely inspected the bandage.

"What for you-all got that rag tied 'round yore head thataway, Ed?" he asked. "Does that Blackie hoss heave yuh off an' bust yuh thataway an' is yore brains a-leakin' out?"

"I reckon yuh pesters the life out o' me till I tells yuh," sighed Love. "Jim, I done got bit by a doodlebug."

"Yore a drunken old liar, Ed Love!" retorted Hart. "Doodlebugs don't bite fools. I demands you-all unlimber the truth before I kicks yuh over this bar. What for is that rag on yore head?"

"I gits this here injury a-huntin' bandits," admitted Love.

"Which bandits?"

"Apache Pete."

Hart stared at his friend unbelievingly.

"When I leaves you-all to ride back to the

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ranch," went on Love, "I'm thinkin' continuous about all that *dinero* Mr. Moore here tells us about. I needs money bad an' figger mebbe that's an easy way to git some. I don't speak my mind free none when yore present, Jim, because I don't want yuh a-prowlin' 'round after no bandit thataway an' gittin' ventilated. Yore usual foolishness frequent gits yuh in trouble, which you-all ain't a careful man like I am. So when I gits out a little ways I veers an' rides north to the Guadalupes."

Hart gave the bartender a quick glance and that worthy laughed uproariously.

"What's that drink-server laughin' at, nohow?" growled Love.

"Fools always laughs thataway when wise men talks," said Hart. "But what for yuh ride up to the Guadalupes for that bandit, Ed? Billy Ranson rides down to the Diablos to pick up that same man."

"Which me an' Billy figgers diff'rent on the whereabouts of Apache Pete, that's all," answered Love. "Anyhow, I finally locates him in the Guadalupes, which that proves I'm right in my prognostications, don't it?"

"Yuh finds him, Ed?" said Hart with growing amazement.

"I shorely does."

"Where at?"

"Up there in Paso Grande cañon," replied the other. "An what's more, Jim, me an' him shoots it out at each other mebbe it's goin' on six hours. One time he scores when he creases my head thataway, which yuh see this rag to mitigate the sufferin's I endures relative thereto. What's ailin' yuh, Jim Hart?"

"My ——, Ed! Was—was that you up there——"

Then abruptly Hart stopped. He knew he had blundered and in an effort to cover his confusion he called loudly to Moore to set out a bottle and glasses.

"What was it yuh started to say, Jim?" asked Love, looking at Hart suspiciously.

"Nothin'," answered Hart.

"Huh!" grunted the other.

A tense situation was suddenly relieved by the sudden appearance of Sheriff Billy Ransom, who at that moment entered the saloon and approached the bar. It was evident that the sheriff was elated by something or other, judging from the smile on his gnarled old face.

"Baldy, you old reprobate, set out ever' bottle yuh got in the shop, an' somebody go an' invite the citizens o' this yere town to come a-runnin' an' drink on me," the sheriff bawled.

"What for this jubilation, Billy?" asked Hart.

"I'm a rich man, that's what for," rejoined sheriff Billy. "I'm jest back from the Diablos, where I journey yisterday to ketch an ornery renegade by the name of Apache Pete, which I jest this minute brought him to town an' locked him up in the calaboose down the street. Where's them bottles, Baldy?"

Late that afternoon two horsemen rode east from Eagle toward the Zee-Jay Ranch. Not a word passed between them until the ranch was almost in sight.

"Mr. Hart, where was yuh all day yisterday afternoon?" Ed Love broke the silence at last.

Hart had evidently been expecting some such question, for his answer was prompt.

"Sleepin' at the hotel."

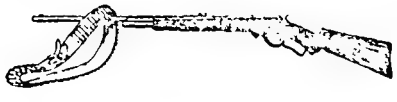
Nothing more was said until they reached the ranch and had turned their horses into the corral. It was Love again who broke the silence.

"Mr. Hart," he said, "I notices four holes in yore hat, which they ain't there yisterday mornin' when I leaves yuh at the Starlight. Am I personal when I asts how they come there?"

"Shorely not, Ed," replied Hart. "Whilst I'm sleepin' yisterday afternoon four doodlebugs flies in at the winder an' seein' my hat on the floor they bores through her an' goes inside to make their nests."

"That's what I figgered," said Love solemnly.

He turned and stalked away, muttering to himself.



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The Land of Ophir

A THREE-PART STORY

PART 1.

by Charles Beadle

Author of "The City of Baal," "Buried Gods" etc.

I'VE often supposed that the man who sticks in the home town, or mighty close, commutes, rears babies and goes in for uplift or any other kind of dope the newspapers put over on 'em, think right back in their nuts that we who've been bitten by that unclassified microbe which produces that incurable disease the *Wanderlust*, are more or less crazy. Maybe that's so, as old Hiram said, and then ag'in, maybe it ain't.

But sometimes, when I've bumped into a few of the boys and squatted around a camp-fire or maybe in a saloon on the Barbary Coast—in those wicked old days—I've often wondered whether the home crowd weren't right. For surely they sometimes are a mighty queer mob; can't stand for a nice regular life with the pay-envelope coming in every week, but seem bent on sniffing about for trouble like a coyote after hens. And what's queerer, in the true specimen, he doesn't seem to care a cuss for money.

A scientific guy says that only those who are slightly crazy do any good in the world, and after a spell with a mob of fellow sufferers I like to think of that; makes me get my tail up and stand no back talk from the drug-store clerk.

I recollect one fellow who certainly was bug-house—a Scot who had a claymore and said he was King Robert Bruce and wandered around carving up native tribes because he opined it made him feel good; another who foot-padded and sailed around the world because he believed in finding out things for himself and really wanted to know whether the world was round; Barney Topper, who became a Buddhist *bonze* because he allowed he didn't like working for his grub; and then Billy Langster, who dug up a bunch of forgotten Phenicians, tried to start an empire, and nearly got eaten for his pains.

And have you ever noticed how schoolmates change when they grow up? You bump into them years after; and an embryo pirate has become a pastor, and the clever little guy is running a sailors' joint in Shanghai.

I've always had a hunch that Captain Kidd and Jean Lafitte must have been choir boys when they were kids and—it seems like sacrilege—I've wondered what happened to *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer* when they grew up; often couldn't help staring at some tame old guy in a clothes store and wanting to inquire—

"Say, mister, 're you *Huck* or *Tom?*"

There was a fellow like that—I don't mean a *Tom* or *Huck*—at school, who didn't run true to form. Long, lanky —— he was, with tow hair and sharp, bird-like eyes.

"*The Land of Ophir*," *copyright*, 1922, *by Charles Beadle.*

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He was a regular New Englander and came from Bawston, which was enough to turn anybody against him.

But it wasn't that so much as his darned cleverness. You know the chap who carries off scholarships and all that, and besides has the nerve to be more'n good at sports. That's where he ran up against me; I'll admit that on the other count I was always an also ran.

Fraser Halde Thorpe ran so hard that the result was a row which ended in an enforced draw. After that I couldn't see my way to take him to my bosom; but that was his fault, for he would try to take it out of me by his tongue until I insisted upon another dose of the same medicine. He was game all right, and it took me ten rounds to put him out—not bad going for youngsters—but then at sixteen I had already well developed the physique of my ancestors, one of whom was an admiral who swept the British from the sea with a broom at his mainmast head.

Somehow nobody liked Thorpe; too darned smart with his tongue—and everybody prophesied that he would end as a bum on the Barbary Coast. We passed out about the same year, he going, as he would, to Harvard. My folks had gone to live in California by then. I guess some old microbe had already bitten me, or the old admiral had broken loose. Dad wanted me to go to Cornell or Princeton if I liked, but I couldn't see it.

I got as far as New York and then—*kismet*, as the Arabs say, shanghaied me on board a wind-jammer bound for Canton. Those were the old days of bucko mates when they hove the old horse overboard and sang "Whisky Johnny." I left the *Charity Wetfield* there because I couldn't stand for the old man's idea of charity with a belaying-pin.

He was a nephew of the owner, and thought he could do what he liked, and was as wet as the old tub in dirty weather. I shipped out of Canton in a British boat where they weren't such rough-necks, and was six or seven years before the mast, and then I got my ticket.

A YEAR or two after that I met up in Yokohama with a fellow cut in a different shape, one Billy Langster, a crazy guy if ever there was one. He'd just scrambled across in a junk from somewhere in China with a bunch of priests on his heels. He'd been trying to lift the emerald eye of a Buddhist god, so he said. I didn't believe him.

Anyway these thugs surely did try to stick him, and I helped to get him out of an ugly mess in an opium-joint. So I came home at last by way of the Golden Gates. I was out of a berth at the time, but I found one as substitute for the second, who had fallen sick, of the bark *John Lavery*, and took Billy along with me.

Of course the folks wanted me to stop home and be good. I couldn't hope, in a way, for mother to understand, but I did expect dad would. But no, sir. We just looked at each other and sort of seemed as if we'd met for the first time. Queer that. And he'd knocked about a bit as a mining engineer before he married. But I've noticed that dads have a trick of cutting all that stuff out of their memory somehow.

One sister was married and up in Seattle, and the other was just on the point of getting spliced with a solemn guy in San Francisco. An elder brother made it worse for me, as he'd followed the dollar trail as tamely as a burro.

I felt out of it, although I was awful sorry for mother. I was broke, of course. Finally I snaked out of it by promising to go up and see sister, but somehow I lost my way and found myself riding the rods East. I felt rather sore about that; seemed mean. But I couldn't help it; just had to. I managed to get nearly as far as Chi, and then got thrown off. Worked in a packing-house for a bit; drifted to Boston; and shipped again.

Down in the Argentine I got a job to run horses to the Cape. Then I was through with the sea for good. Went with the crowd up to Kimberley, but I was a bit late for the ball; starved and nearly died of thirst, tramping in circles about the Kalahari Desert for three years, and only found one three-carat stone. I've got it still in a stick-pin. After that I quit and went up into Rhodesia.

There I met up with a fellow, an Africander, Ollendorf, whom I'd known down in the Kalahari. He was flush for the moment and grub-staked me for a prospecting-trip. A bit of luck came my way, and I located a likely reef. But that meant expensive machinery, so we sold out to a Bulawayo company and went in together trading. Did mighty well for a bit, and

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then as there were too many others butting in we decided to trek north, Zambesi way and beyond.

Some months later we pulled into Gwelo and just naturally made for the nearest saloon—the Maxim Hotel, I recollect. As Ollendorf called for swigs of real Montagu *dop* to take the dust of the road out of our mouths I began to stare, for there was something familiar about the lanky figure and tow hair of the barkeep.

As he turned to serve us I caught a certain twist of the head on the neck that started phone bells ringing—Fraser Halde Thorpe!

So vividly did old memories come tingling back that I wanted to laugh. Thorpe the clever guy, Thorpe the superior person, as a barkeep in a pioneer shanty! Some scholarship! And yet there was something—old times I guess—which brought him round in a different light. I felt tickled to death to see him. At first he didn't seem at all pleased to see me, but he thawed and grinned.

He seemed changed a lot, yet just the same in mannerisms. Of course we had a long *indaba*. Seems he'd smothered himself in glory at Harvard, started in on academic wings as a professor, and then something came over him—he wasn't good at explaining what—and he cut the painter without warning.

"Bully," thought I; "I never thought he was capable of it," and warmed to him, for I understood better than he did himself.

Then he found out that out in the open you couldn't rope a steer with an 'ology, nor did it help any to keep your feet on a gasket at the end of a yard in a southerly gale. He had wandered around really learning things. And here he was, a professor in a bar! And he's not the only one I've met.

Naturally I wanted to do all I could to fix him up. Persuaded him after a lot of trouble to come along with me to Salisbury, where, through relations of my partner, Ollendorf, I got him a job as secretary up at the Kaiser Wilhelm Mine, Urania way.

ABOUT a year later we had wandered down after ivory to the northwest of Lake Albert Edward in a district which was—on the map—French territory. At the kraal of a chief, with whom we were bartering for porters, occurred another of those little coincidences in life. Another trader—or he said he was—came along and pitched his camp close beside ours. I saw him coming in, and noticed that he had a big number of men in the *safari* carrying nothing; women as well. He came over to look us up, and neither Ollendorf nor I took a fancy to him.

We put him down as a Levantine of some sort—mixture of Greek, Syrian, the Lord knows what, such as Alexandria and the Levant breeds. He had a yellow neck and a curious trick of moving his eyes without moving his head—like a darned lizard. He spoke English fairly well—some of that tribe speak a dozen lingoes "fairly well"—and said his name was Gandy, but he was too slick and cringing for us to have much truck with.

According to his yarn he was bound west looking for ivory, but I had a shrewd suspicion then that the color was black, and anyway he'd come in from that very direction. We gave him a cup of tea and shunted him off.

But about seven that night—almost full moon—there was a —— of a caterwauling from his camp, and a boy came bawling that the "white man" was killing his sister.

"Come on, Olly!" said I. "Get your gun, man, and let's see what this yellow-belly's up to."

Over in his camp, in the light of the fire and moon, among a crowd of jabbering natives, was a woman spread-eagled to a tree and a big black buck laying into her with a *sjambok*. By his side stood little Gandy; evidently conducting operations.

Telling Olly to keep his gun on the Levantine, I covered the big fellow and ordered him to loose the girl. He gave one look and obeyed—*pronto*—amid wild expostulations from Gandy, as he called himself.

"Quit that!" I told him. "Or you'll be mighty sorry. I don't give a —— what the girl's done, but we'll have no rough stuff around while we're here. What's the matter anyway?"

I turned to the girl, who was crouched in a heap with her back in a bloody mess. I asked in Kiswahili—

"Who does she belong to?"

A cowering native in the gloom of a tree answered that they all belonged to the "white man." Slavery! That made me madder than ——. I called out,

"Keep that little swine covered, Olly,"

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and added to the natives, "Every man and woman who wants his freedom, let him run for the bush and I will hold this thing which is no 'white man.' "

Gandy broke out into a half a dozen languages, I reckon, in his rage, but the poor devils needed no second bidding. They beat it for all they were worth, and the girl as well.

"You have no right, I tell you!" yelled Gandy. "Thees is my people! We are not in French country! We——"

"I don't care where we are," I retorted "but just get it into your head that no white man will stand for that sort of thing. Get that? Now you'll stop right here for half an hour and then we'll go home, but if you try any tricks you'll start something. Get me?"

But, crazy with rage, he danced right up under my nose shrieking insults until I was compelled to slap his face to bring him to his senses.

And then he did shut up, contenting himself by mumbling curses under Olly's gun, while mine attended to his men. After that we went back to our camp. Although I took the precaution to put out sentries he didn't try any come-back. As a matter of fact the village people knew who he was and would have jumped at a chance, backed up by us, to wipe him out. Next morning he left at sunrise, mighty glad, I think, to get away with a whole skin.

WE WORKED our way slowly, trading and shooting, right up through Tanganyika into Uganda, and did mighty well. Later Ollendorf, who had been badly mauled by a lion and had had several goes of black-water, died of the combination. I was pretty rotten with fever too. I sold out, and then as I could never let well alone I decided to go out by way of the Sudan, after which I would be through with Africa for good. I could afford to be anyway.

But in what is now the Lado Enclave a party of the Mahdi's crowd rushed my camp and wiped out everybody except me, whom they took prisoner—but not before they'd paid mighty dear for the privilege. They kept me around like a bear on a chain for two years and more. In every village or in their own walled towns, they'd stick me in a cage or have me tied while their kids and young men could come and curse, spit on me and make faces like so many monks.

I had some —— of a time, believe me. I can't think about it now without feeling sort of sick in the stomach. Finally I made a break when in the Sudan, and, thanks to my knowledge of their lingoes, got into Kitchener's lines near Khartum. But they surely had mussed me.

When they hoofed me out of hospital after about six months, I went to Italy and made my way slowly back to the Golden State. But I was still such a sick *hombre* that I consented to lay off the trail for good, and that's saying something for the Mahdi bunch!

Guess I might as well admit that a certain little lady with hair like a sunset and blue eyes like the Indian Sea had assisted at the regeneration. You bet the old folk were mighty pleased.

I bought a ranch down in Kings County and started in being good and pretty. And did for some five years—although I'll admit on the square I did get my feet itchy pretty frequently and made a couple of trips down to Mexico.

Then the third inevitable came along, and my partner left me. I put the kids with the old folk and trekked back to Mexico. From there I drifted into a couple of Venezuelan rebellions; got punctured several times, but cleaned up a lump of dough which I didn't particularly need.

Some time later I was in New York City about some business in Tampico. On Broadway I bumped into a fellow I had known slightly down in Mexico—an Englishman, and a good boy in a tough corner but not overstocked with gray matter. Anyway I took him to grub. We found ourselves in the Tenderloin, where we raised a first-class riot. Some smart Alec tried to lift my raw stone for which I'd sweated so mighty hard in the Kalahari Desert for three years. He got what was coming, and then some. Then the gang started the rough stuff.

Hardwicke somehow got separated, and after a lively five minutes I saw that they had him down in a corner. I waded in all spraddled out and got him away, but by the time the argument was over we were both well mussed up.

Anyway next day while we were licking our wounds in a decent feeding-joint he got kind of communicative—sort of out of

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gratitude I suppose. Talked a lot of hot air about something he was sworn to secrecy about, but I guess I know how to make a man come through. There were several other *hombres* mixed up in the scheme, which sounded suspiciously like a piratical outfit—was connected with a mysterious yacht and Africa.

I reckoned I knew something about yachts and Africa too. It smelled mighty good to me. Next day at any rate he made an awful fuss as to what he had said, but I insisted, and he consented to make me meet the big noise.

That evening Hardwicke took me to a well-known restaurant, where, seated in the shadow of a table lamp, was a well-groomed, fair man, dolled up in evening clothes.

He shook hands with Hardwicke and the latter began—

"I say, I want to introduce you to Mr. Philip——"

But I had caught a glimpse of the hard-cut face and the green, cat eyes and exclaimed—

"Bill, by glory!"

II

"OH," Billy drawled quietly, "so it's Phil Tromp. Sit down, old-timer, and tell where you came from anyway."

That was just like Billy. But I was rather peeved that his greeting was so cool. On that homeward trip from Yokohama in the *John Lavery* I had rather cottoned to him, although I only half-believed the hints of yarns he'd tell sometimes during a dog watch. He had changed much in the years, and he flattered me, with a twinkle in his eye, that I hadn't; but I knew better, for the Mahdi gang had seen to that.

He ordered cocktails much as if we were just sort of signaling in passing; but I saw by a sharp, interrogative glance at his henchman, Hardwicke, that he was wondering whether I knew anything or not. We talked reminiscences during dinner. When I casually referred to my wanderings in Africa I noticed that he pricked up his ears. I sketched my days since, but he didn't respond in kind.

I began to get impatient, yet I didn't want to give Hardwicke away. Presently, with the coffee and a liqueur, I butted in with an indirect hint.

"Now say, Billy," said I, "what game are you up to now? Haven't any more eyes of a Buddhist god in view, have you?"

Billy lighted a cigar with care, smiled vaguely and replied—

" 'Smatter of fact I have—this time it isn't Chinese."

"Where is it now—Alaska or the Andes?" I inquired blandly, smiling at Hardwicke. "I want something hot, for I've never been able to stand the cold since the Mahdi toasted my toes."

"Say," said he after a long pause, regarding me solemnly, "d'you believe in predestination?"

"Holy glory!" I exclaimed, gulping; for I'm not accustomed to freight words, except in books. "What on earth d'you mean?"

"Nothing. I was just thinking. From what you hinted of your trail since I left you on the Barbary Coast you are the one man I've been praying for."

Hardwicke looked relieved, and I began to feel that I really liked Billy. He looked at his cigar ash meditatively.

"You're a crazy guy, Phil," said he. "That's why I prayed for you. Bit rusty, but I prayed mighty hard, believe me. That, and your African experience. Say—know the patter a bit, huh?"

"You bet. Arabic, Kiswahili, Sintebili, Madingo, Ewe—or I used to; and I guess I could rub 'em up a bit."

"Good. I remember you surprized me by the way you slung the chink talk—almost as well as I did myself in those days. I'm not great, for one thing, on northern lingo, although I can sling it a bit. It's Africa this time."

"Ah," said I loyally, "so maybe I'll call in on some of my old pals."

"Sure, I hope so. It's around that way. Say, let's go to the lounge. I'm not used to hunching up straight like a fakir with an arm up. Smells stuffy and stale to me, all this. I've been in this burg for three weeks too long, and, oh, boy! I'm just that thirsty for a real man's land."

He called for the bill, and we went to Billy's room. When we were comfortably housed with the usual fixtures Billy, sitting on his shoulders sucking a cigar, began:

"After I left you on the Barbary Coast, as broke as you were, I too went off to see my folk and tried to be good. But nothing doing. I drifted up to li'l ole New York

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one bright day and fell across a dopy guy in an opium-joint down the Bowery, who told me such a crazy yarn that I lied like a greaser and got an uncle to grub-stake me for planting in Ceylon or the Andes—I've forgotten where—but it worked enough dough to carry me off to East Africa.

"There I got in with a bunch of prehistoric guys who had been intimate pals of Adam or nearabouts, running the oldest religion in the world. Snaked my way in, and—by the Lordy!—became pretty nigh chief priest. Got an English fellow in with me, Faxen, a good sport. We both got darned nigh eaten, but in the end cleaned up a tidy boodle in gold vases and shields and other junk.

"After that, Faxy went home. Never seen him since. But after a joy ride round the States I started in to finance a scheme to corner the opium trade in China and dropped every red cent. Never touch China again. No, sir. Don't seem lucky for me somehow. Then I fooled around in Peru. Came darned near having to work for my grub—you know what I mean—would have if I hadn't taken to the road and hiked across into Brazil.

"On the way those darned Indians nigh got my handsome head for a miniature to sling in their huts. Then I struck some emeralds and went back to Africa again—up in Morocco—and tried my hand at making sultans. Might have had the country as a sort of sun-porch, but the European powers were so mighty prejudiced. Anyhow that's how I hit the trail for this outfit. Say, did you ever drop across Johnny Starleton at Alkazar?"

I hadn't, yet I felt rather peeved in admitting the fact. I always regret, as a matter of fact, that I haven't been in every spot on earth; sort of get sore if I have to admit publicly that I haven't yet been in ——. You know the sort of feeling.

"But of course you wouldn't," continued Billy, "as he's never been farther from Morocco than Gib. Think he's a rock scorpion, although his brother, Freddy, claims to be an American citizen. Anyway Johnny's quite a big noise around there. He speaks Arabic like a native—better than English—at least I hope he does! Fat! Looks like an amiable Buddha. In with all the Moors and has land and does a thriving trade in the protegé game.

"You know, if a Moor is in partnership or in the employ of a Britisher or Frenchman, he can claim protection and exemption from any little fads the sultan or local *kaids* think up. Johnny has dozens, and a quarter or more of each one's property as consideration. Oh, he's some wise guy! I ran into him on the king-making business. Half came in, but the sly bird knew too much, I guess.

"Anyway through him I met up with another regular fellow, an Irish lord without any bucks who'd been trying to wangle some concession down south from a big chief, Ma-el-Einen. This fellow's a *shareef*—holy man—who claims descent from Mohammed. There're millions of 'em, but he's a kind of pope—doesn't even pay tribute to the sultan. 'Smatter of fact, the boot's on the other leg, for the sultan pays him—to keep quiet down in the Sûs.

"Fieldmorre got the concession, but signed only by deputy—anyway the whole scheme was mussed by political jealousy—same as me. France, England and Germany are all sitting round with their tongues lolling out, with one eye on Morocco and the other on each other.

"He reckoned to break in at Cape Juby away below Agadir on the border of the reputed Spanish territory. He'd already been down there and done some trading in a small way, but the great idea was to start a base station there and another in the interior, and tap the great caravan route from the Sudan and the Congo, which passes through the country.

"The idea had been begun before, Fieldmorre told me, and showed me the documents. The whole scheme was started by an old Syrian, whom Fieldmorre stumbled upon in London, when looking for a teacher of Arabic. This Sabah as a youth had found the place—how I don't know. Anyway he did, and came to London with a great yarn of the riches in mica, wool, ivory and gold.

"A dozen got together and formed a syndicate; dubbed themselves the Gentlemen Adventurers. They bought some old tub and started off. But before they'd got farther than Lisbon, seasickness took the guts out of six of 'em and they quit cold. The other six heroes and the Syrian plunged on recklessly; but when they got to the Cape Verde three more got cold feet and were yelling for their mammies. Some adventurers! Reminded me of the nursery

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rime about 'Twelve little nigger boys sitting in a row!'

"The remaining three and Sabah the Syrian interpreter and promoter put into Lanzarotte to establish a base, took a deep breath and dived for Juby. It appears that first they got along fine. An Arab chief loved 'em like brothers and was tickled to death at the idea of bringing nice woolly lambs into his district. They signed treaties and the Lord knows what. The chief gave 'em a bit of rock, on which they built a fort-factory, and his protection from desert nomads. They started in to do mighty well, apparently.

"The only he man of the party seems to have been a Scot with a hard head. As long as he was there things ran like a ferry-boat. He saw the possibilities and wanted to go up-country, so he left for home to dig up more capital from the other nine pirates sitting in their clubs in Pall Mall, and left a young stiff in charge named Wilkins with Sabah. 'Smatter of fact Sabah was the whole goods, particularly from the chief's point of view; blood brother and so on; spoke the lingo perfectly.

"But Wilkins, left alone, thinks he's a —— of a noise and insisted on running the show. Before, they had always gone ashore to trade; but now this dry-goods young man got cold feet, wouldn't listen to Sabah, and refused to budge off the rock, which kind of hurt the old man's feelings, I guess.

"After that the natives wouldn't—or seldom would—come near the fort to trade; probably they were sulky. Wilkins wanted to send insulting and threatening messages, but Sabah wouldn't translate 'em. Then one fine day he takes himself by the pants and drags himself ashore, presumably to give the chief a calling down.

"As luck would have it, a party of interior Arabs drifted in on a raid. Wilkins beat it to his rock, saying his prayers, and began firing on every one within sight on the beach. Sabah in disgust wanted to resign, but he couldn't get away, as their lugger was over at Lanzarotte at the time, where the other stiff was in charge of the base, who was also, from all accounts, a prize boob.

"At any rate, after the riot was over, the chief, who seems to have been a mighty good sport, sent to the fort, explaining that the attackers were some of the nomad tribes who had got out of hand, but that nothing serious had been intended. This handsome apology the Wilkins boob, who had shot up some of the sheik's own men, refused to accept, maintaining that it was a plot to trap him ashore and slit his worthless throat.

"From Sabah's account they remained shut up and isolated from the shore, firing wildly at anything that approached in a boat, while Wilkins sent frantic letters when the lugger came, reporting that they were besieged by thousands of wild Arabs or some such nonsense and begging for a British gunboat!

"This cheery news came just at the time that the Scot had persuaded the syndicate to come across with some dough. Just naturally they closed up like a clam, and although history don't relate the fact I shouldn't be surprized if they fortified Pall Mall and assembled the British Navy. What they did do was to work things with their Government to terrify the sultan—who had no more power or property there than I have in Kansas City—into buying the store on the rock for a quarter of a million perfectly good bucks with warships and admirals to collect it! Fact! Some put-over, the scuts!"

"But what's happened since?"

"LISTEN and I'll tell," reproved Billy. "That outfit was somewhere around thirty years ago or so. As I said, Fieldmorre had been down there with an old Syrian Sabah, trading in a small way—he it was who got up-country to Ma-el-Einen and got Fieldmorre's concession, and at the time when I butted in he was figuring on making another run. We chipped in. The fort's still there—or the ruins—mostly inhabited by a son of the old sheik, whose men Wilkins shot up. He wasn't over-pally when we came. Probably, I thought, he recollected stories of his father and wondered whether the fort was fool-proof.

"But the real trouble had been that Fieldmorre had on the last trip fallen foul of his idea on morals. A French crew had been wrecked there, and some of his men who don't seem to love the French, reckoned it was a good opportunity to get even a bit by cutting their throats; lined 'em up on the beach with that amiable intention.

"Fieldmorre just naturally couldn't stand for that. He got the sheik aboard by a ruse, then put a gun to his *jelab* and asked him

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politely how many houris he reckoned he was going to meet within the next few minutes, or words to that effect.

"The sheik reconstructed his system of ethics, but he had evidently remained sore about the affair on account of his loss of face with his people. Then Fieldmorre figured it would be good to have a change of air for a while. With his Irish sense of humor he had forgotten to mention this small entanglement.

"Anyway after a lot of powwow, and Sabah's influence, we bought his good-will and did a little trade; filled up the lugger with stuff and made several runs to Lanzarotte. Neither of us had much cash to play around with, so we couldn't do anything big. I decided I'd rather go into the interior than fool around in a small way. Fieldmorre was game. So we sent back the boat to the islands.

"But when we broached the matter to the Sheik Abu Matla he warned us in his long-winded, Oriental way that he would not be responsible to the British or French Government for us—he had a holy terror of warships since a talkee-talkee after the shipwrecked-sailor outfit—and any non-Mohammedan going into the interior usually ended in one of the various fancy deaths which they're so good at inventing. However, naturally we weren't to be put off and by means of stuff in kind and larger promises Sabah got him to provide us with animals and men to take us as far as the big boss, the Shareef Ma-el-Einen.

"We had several little brushes with nomads, but nothing serious, and found the old gentleman a decent sort of guy. He promised to sign any old thing until we shoved the papers under his nose, and then came such a cross-fire of 'ifs' and 'buts' and 'hows' and 'whys' that there was nothing doing for weeks. In the meantime we kept our eyes skinned, and while Fieldmorre and Sabah did the powpow I sweated up the lingo.

"Pour me out another, Hardwicke, there's a good boy. Talking makes me as dry as that darned desert. Go on, Phil! Huh? Oh, then before we tried to come to terms with the old boy something butted in that kinder painted the horse another color—a small Frenchman named Vèron, who spoke Arabic like a native. He drifted in one day with a caravan from the French Senegal and was making his way to Tlemcen, exploring and mapping, and so into Algeria.

"He was a sporting little guy with a pug nose and a dense red beard and eyebrows, and we were mighty glad to see him there. As we had some canned stuff and he was living Arab he dined with us. Talking afterward with Fieldmorre, who slings French like one of 'em—I can't unfortunately—he kinder loosened up and started relating his adventures.

"But when Fieldmorre told him where we figured to make for he went right up in the air. You know what a —— of a fuss a Frenchie's liable to make. I caught a few of the words. 'Imposseeble!' he kept on crying, and something about suicide. The rest I couldn't get until Fieldmorre interpreted.

"To cut it short, he sang tenor to the Sheik Matla's bass: Sure as death and all that sort of stuff; suicide to attempt the trip without a powerful column. Some mysterious tribe away beyond; every white disappeared; not one but many; several French, a German trader, a Swiss from the Belgian Congo Free State, and an Englishman was the last.

"When we or Fieldmorre politely demurred, Vèron dived beneath his robes—he was in Arab dress of course—and yanked out a dirty parchment-bound book from his *skaarrah*—the kind of leather bag Arabs carry.

"'*V'la! V'la*,' he shouted, and gabbled excitedly.

"'The captain says,' interpreted Fieldmorre, 'that the last man to disappear was an English explorer; that this book, which is his uncompleted diary, he bought from a coast Fantee who had probably stolen it, thinking that he could get a lot of money for it from a white. The captain wishes us to read it.'

"'No! No!' exclaimed the Frenchman, staring at me. 'You—must—no. No—good. Keel.' And launched into a voluble explanation.

"Anyway there in the small tent over a hurricane lamp Fieldmorre and I read something which changed our ideas quite a bit."

Billy got up quietly, and, opening a dispatch-box, took out a small book, the binding of which was covered in grubby canvas.

"Read it," said he, "while I get a rest. Guess I'm not used to all this lip-work. Start right there," he added, finding a page three-quarters of the way through. "The

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other's just ordinary exploration notes from the beginning of the trip."

III

THE canvas cover of the small book was battered, and looked as if it had been twenty times across Africa. The writing, on lined paper with a margin, was small and crabbed, sometimes in ink and sometimes in pencil, mighty hard to read. The page Billy had indicated opened with this entry:

Oct. 26—Arrived village of Nsonnafo. Tribe: Sunfaso. About thousand inhabitants. Pastoral people; plenty of milk, eggs, etc. Glad to be out of tropical forest country and the humid heat. The chief, from tribal marks, is Mambaziwa, as most of the ruling class seem to be in this country. Very hospitable. Treated me well and afterward seemed very friendly, replying to my inquiries quite freely. Mohammedan, and so are his people; but seem, like so many religions, not to have cast out old tribal superstitions.

Noticed a mark which I think is the symbol of a subphraty of the Snake Society. From what he didn't say I rather surmise that they still practise the pagan rites as freely as ever. Later persuaded him to relate some of the current legends (see Note 257). More curious than usual, and bear every evidence of the totem system corroborated by him. His totem is Sonyaza (*Felis Dawei*) and is therefore forbidden to kill or touch them. Most intelligent. Shall accept his invitation to stay a few days.

Nov. 1—Still at Nsonnafo's. Quite like him. Gave me a shoot; put up bearers and everything splendidly. Brought up a young wife suffering from a tumor; looked suspiciously like a cancerous growth. Wish I knew a little more surgery. Would have loved to operate. Lanced and dressed it, which seemed to give her much relief. Old man very grateful; wanted me to accept a whole tusk, but I can't spare porters.

Next day he became more communicative and has opened up considerably; talked a lot about the country and boasted about himself. Says that he is a descendant as far as I can make out of the Ethiopians (which quite possibly may be true as there always has been a great influx from the East all over the Sudan—this is, strictly speaking, the Sudan) and talks about a great empire bigger than the white man's which was called in the time of his great ancestors O-feer (sounds like Ophir; but this is ridiculous, as the land of Ophir from which Solomon got his gold was thought to be in Arabia but has recently been proved to be Zimbabwe in southern Mashonaland, the Phenician ruins. May be a reference to the empire of Melle, which in the 17th century was of vast extent from the Nile to the Gold Coast. Must try to find origin of this name O-feer. Curious!) I asked him where the empire was now, but he said abruptly that he didn't know.

Seems to grasp reason for my questions. Had long conversation. Astonishing hold of what one almost may call philosophy; propounded curious scheme based (I think. Look up details) on Berber cosmogony. Gave me a whole heap of native folk lore (see Note 261). Very valuable, as I hadn't come across any similar record.

Nov. 8—Nsonnafo, begging me to stay for indefinite period, wants me to become blood brother, thanks to the lucky chance of my surgical attempt; wife doing splendidly. When talking about supplies, which he wishes me to accept without payment, I asked what sort of country was to the northeast. He said, "Bad." I inquired if any whites had been up there. He said distinctly that several had gone there.

When I asked whether they had come back this way, the manner in which he replied that they had not—"none at all"—awoke my suspicions that he was keeping back something—that, and the insistent invitation to stay or return to the coast. Rather wish I could afford the time, particularly as he's such a good sort, but mainly because of my suspicions. Smacks of something to do with tabu.

Nov. 10—Made two days' good march. Country fairly good going, rolling uplands, grass and bush; plenty of game; many small villages belonging to Nsonnafo; nights quite pleasantly cool immediately after sunset.

My suspicion was correct. Before leaving, Nsonnafo, after much beating about the bush, advised me not to continue as the country was dangerous; under pressure said that two whites had gone up there—a

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German and a Frenchman as far as I could make out—but had died there; how, I could not get a hint from him. I told him that we whites were not in the habit of turning back because of danger—seemed rotten thing to say, but one has to remember prestige and the native mind.

He closed up after that until I was bidding him good-by. Then without direct reference to the previous warning he presented me with a charm hung on a native-worked gold chain, which he mentioned casually would preserve me from the evil spirits on the road. As I thanked him he added that he wished me to leave a piece of nail or some of my hair with him. I replied solemnly that I should be delighted to please him and asked why he wanted it.

"So that my doctor may enchant it and that your soul (of the head) will come to dwell in my country," he replied.

This from a professed Mohammedan! Mohammed would have had a fit, but it corroborates my idea that they retain all the old pagan practises and beliefs. But, good Lord, if one were to be put off by every African superstition one wouldn't get farther than Accra! Ridiculous, but very interesting, bless the old boy!

After that, for several pages came ordinary entries about the country and the villages he was passing through. Then this:

Nov. 21—Came down six hundred and ninety feet in the last five days. Country becoming more tropical and temperature mounting in ratio. Uninhabited. Last village learned no natives for ten days and that they were "bad." Probably means vigorous, warlike tribe who raid them; pastoral and agricultural tribes always say that—and with cause—about the others.

Nov. 26—Came most unexpectedly upon arid scrub. Fortunately thought it looked ugly, and so stocked up with water. No more native paths. Steering by compass due northeast.

Nov. 30—Country same, except for fortunate *donga*, where by digging we refilled water-skins. Can see ahead blue of low hills.

Dec. 2—Nsonnafo was surely right. Country bad—looks worse ahead; hills bare gneissic granite; no sign of vegetation nor water last day; sand; not even Cactaceæ or Palmaceæ; no means of estimating how far hills extend. Porters say two days, three days, ten days, one moon; usual reactions to suggestion and fear of white; very uneasy and discontented; going is very hard for them; can't make speed in this infernal sand.

Dec. 5—Seven porters deserted—had to hold remainder with revolver night and day; no sleep for two nights. Today have tied them together. Had to abandon five loads and split up others. In midst of hills, low conical shaped; full of boulders. Fortunately foresaw lack of water and put camp on half-ration at last water, but only enough for two or three days. Hills look interminable. Country looks like what *Macbeth's* blasted heath ought to have looked like.

Dec. 8—Three porters collapsed; had to leave them; water nearly exhausted; one spoonful each for the day. Feel groggy myself; blazing heat of refraction and touch of malaria (temp. 101). Suppose was a bit light-headed; cursed because I couldn't shoot those poor souls and put them out of their misery; others staggering; want to lie down and die; feel like a slave-driver.

Desert of sand, limestone, shale, Paleozoic. No sign of break in infernal country. Forced abandon all loads except instruments, guns, ammunition, canvas boat, some food and medicine; divided loads into quarters for each man. Heat awful—119 degrees shade—no shelter.

Dec. 11—Four more porters caved in; had force on others by threatening to shoot (queer reaction—desire to die yet frightened of gun) water finished; no break . . . groggy . . . seem walking in circles.

Dec. 12—Serious. Abandoned instruments, everything except little food and trade goods and medicine; another two dropped; one went mad; saw him running up a hill; tried to shoot; poor devil.

Dec. 13—Escarpment; forest below; porters bucked up, struggling gamely.

Dec. 16—Descended some hundreds of feet, but can not record as have no instruments. —— nuisance. . . . Forest dense. . . . Am resting beside small river; no sign of inhabitants. One porter died last night of exhaustion apparently; probably drank too much water. Signs of plenty game about, but too done up to go out yet. Still have slight fever. Intend stay another two days, get men fit. Bit depressed; think really because instruments all gone. If have any luck by meeting friendly people, will try persuade them to go back and pick up goods and recover instruments.

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DEC. 17—Camp rushed dawn; sentry either asleep or surprized; every one massacred except myself for some reason. Natives mixed; some negroes, others Fulani type and all robed Arab fashion, armed mostly long-bladed spears, swords and good many guns—Belgian Sniders. Promptly looted all gear left; saved this diary as it happened to be in my *skarrah;* that, revolver, knife, pocket compass, sketching-pad, pencils and empty pen is all I have.

Leader dressed better than others. Fulani type but speaks Arabic well; can understand dialect; related to Mandingo.

Leader refused answer questions save that I am to be taken before local chief in whose village I am now. Houses mud and wattle after Arab fashion but better constructed than any seen south. This house of chief, of stone and mud; furnished grass mats; carved stools; and much woven and dyed cloths.

Haven't succeeded in extracting any information of what they intend to do with me. Call themselves Mazatlanzi. Evidently only lower classes negroid wear any tribal cicatrices; probably slaves raided from south; noticed on lintel of this house sign of Snake Society. Inference probably Nsonnafo belongs subphraty and dared not reveal what he knew; hence his well-meaning hints. . . . Fortunately feel normal again.

Dec. 19—Haven't had an opportunity to make entry as have been on *safari* and dare not openly write for fear they may force me to give up book, thinking, native fashion, that I am making magic. Saw chief next day. Fair and red-haired. Certainly Berber origin. Very courteous. Asked innumerable questions, to some of which I replied; others I refused.

Curious beast. Reminded me of some one, but I can't think who. Noticed that before, by the way; natives frequently remind one in some curious way of Europeans one knows or has met.

Well dressed in Arab fashion; jeweled dagger sticking ostentatiously out of his *jelab:* embroidered shoes—not on him, of course, but outside the door—worked after the Moroccan pattern. Lives well too.

Offered kind of Oriental sweets and splendid coffee. When I protested against the massacre of my men and asked what the —— they meant by making me a prisoner, he reacted in the Oriental way by ignoring my questions, and when I pointed out the danger of being impolite to a white man he smiled slightly—the beast! But I couldn't get one single bit of information save that I was to be taken to the city of the sultan . . . —— irritating; but in playing this game with Orientals one has to have the patience of Sisyphus.

Dec. 24—Mambakzino. Am arrived at the capital, and the residence of the sultan. Certainly was astonished, and have been ever since leaving the first village. From there runs a broad, made road (no record of this in Africa before European influence save Uganda—true, there is evidently extensive Arabian influence). Each village passed—and some were almost towns relatively—were walled and quartered after the true Arabian fashion. Noted many fair; some red-haired; Berber origin, as the first chief was; evidently the aristocracy.

Left dense forest first day; rolling, park-like country; probably about five thousand feet, judging roughly since I lost altimeter; evidently rich soil and looks auriferous, although I had no opportunity to examine; seemingly corroborated by the quantity of gold bangles worn by the nobility (another point; as with Nsonnafo's people they are Mohammedans; but don't observe strictly). Palm-wine is also drunk, I remarked. Much cultivation; observed cotton, coffee, indigo, maize, rice, plantains, bananas, cassava, millet.

Certainly was astonished by the size of the capital; estimate must contain somewhere about seventy or eighty thousand inhabitants—if not more. Remarked that here houses nearly all built of stone and mud, with large courtyards and gardens. Find this remarkable so far south. Noticed, too, passing through the streets, few modern rifles: Lee Enfields, Mannlichers, Winchesters, as well as many Martini Sniders.

Didn't have an opportunity to see much of the town as they brought me straight here—in a hammock, for which I was very grateful, for I've got a temperature again. Don't know what, as these swine have stolen my medicine-chest.

Noted several mosques. City sprawls rather pleasantly over several small low hills. . . . Saw in garden the largest monitor lizards I've ever seen, some quite six feet or more long.

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Am lodged, I believe—for I can't make any of them talk and have nothing to bribe them with—in the sultan's palace, for I entered through very thick walls—didn't look very old, which I thought was odd—into a house which appeared to be in the center of large gardens, with terraces, as far as I could make out, somewhere beyond. . . .

There's a bright moon tonight, and through the large window, barred, the gardens look very beautiful, filled with a warm, spicy odor. I'm to see the sultan tomorrow. . . .

I meant to write more tonight, the first chance to be alone for some few days, but I feel fed up and irritated, and my head's like a —— balloon with malaria.

Dec. 25—Am scribbling this in antechamber of sultan. Dragged me out at sunrise; appeared to be in some sort of hurry. Wonderful gardens; never saw anything like them. Window overlooks. Everybody here seems to be Berber origin, nobles I presume. Dressed magnificently; jewels in their turbans and swords. Guards gigantic negroes — probably slaves from West Coast.

Palace certainly is Oriental; most luxurious. This room not very big but lofty; walls, doors, ceiling, floor, made of planks like a parquet, of ivory, with gold setting between, cemented as it were; two low divans in watered silk—looks to me like a product of the House of Liberty—on one of which I'm sitting. Nothing else.

Curious; this white or rather old-ivory-and-gold room exercises a weird effect. Suddenly recalled Nsonnafo's yarn about his ancestors and the empire of O-feer, and surely the profusion of gold and ivory suggest Ophir. Certainly would be a great joke to prove the pundits wrong about the Zimbabwe. . . .

Later. Just heard bits of curious conversation outside my window—spoken in good Arabic. Something about:

"Sidna is very pleased, for Allah hath surely blessed his ways.

"Great is Allah! For he hath sent a sweetly morsel for our lord O-Seeah-do.

"Who knoweth the will of Allah? Who knoweth whether he be destined for the lords of the forest or the arena?

"Who knoweth the will of Allah!"

Curious. Evidently refers to some pagan practise which, as I've observed in my notes, clings to these Moham . .

THE last sentence was scarcely decipherable; ended in a scratch.

I looked up at Billy and Hardwicke, smoking cigars. Billy regarded me meditatively as if trying to figure out how I was taking it. Then he said with a slightly satirical smile—

"Reckon its genuine?"

"I do, sure."

I stared at the worn little book and reread mechanically the last few words.

"For the love of Mike—have you read this, Hardwicke?" I asked.

"I have, and I'm with Langster until —— freezes."

"Me too," said I, "but—but what happened after——"

"That's what we're going to find out—that and several other things."

"But—who was this guy anyway?"

"Inside the cover," directed Billy.

I pulled back the canvas envelop.

"W-w-w-w-what!" I gasped.

On the parchment cover was printed in copperplate:

FRASER HALDE THORPE.

"Frazzy Thorpe! Glory! Of all the——"

IV

"WHY—did you know him?" inquired Billy.

"I was at the same school with him. By glory, sure I know him, and I'll bet he hasn't forgotten me!"

I sat looking at the grubby little book and thought of those friendly scraps with Thorpe. Had Africa got him? If so, here was myself evidently about to ask for the same medicine. Mighty queer!

After all, was it? Stranger coincidences than that in life. Yet I couldn't get rid for some time of a sense of something uncanny—sort of shivery feeling about the spine, as if you were just getting a message from gran'ma on the planchette, telling you to be sure to keep on your flannel underwear, only making you feel funny all the same.

"The little Frenchman had a heap more to say," continued Billy, setting a glass on the table. "He went on jabbering to Fieldmorre, and I had to sit and cuss. After reading that diary he just naturally wanted to find out what there was to it. He was a sporting little guy—that's why he let us have the diary—and wanted to go and

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look himself. But he was on duty, and, as he insisted, he knew too much about the country to try out fool tricks on his own. 'Smatter of fact, his attitude convinced us, and that's why we abandoned the trip right there and came back to hunt up the sinews of bloody war, as they say, if that bunch up there really want it."

"But didn't he try to get a line on how the Fantee got hold of this diary?" I inquired.

"Sure he tried. What he didn't know about natives wasn't worth knowing, but all the same he didn't get much. The man said he'd gotten it way up among the Mandingo; insisted that he had bought it from a Hausa. Probably he had stolen it, as I suggested before; yet from what the diary says that might have been possible. One of the negro guards he talks about might have stolen it and deserted.

"However, later he did get some more information—not about your friend or the diary, but about this mysterious tribe. He palled up with an Arab, who thought he was a genuine Mohammedan too—I told you he talks the lingo like a native; that's his job anyway—and from him got a long-winded story.

"The tribe, so the man said, are an offshoot of the Mandingo, but were conquered a long while ago by a mysterious band of Berber nomads, which, according to Vèron, sounds weak, as they are not in the habit of giving up nomading, as it were."

" 'Even as you and I,' " I quoted, and added, "Once a nomad always a nomad!"

"That's right. However, until about five or six years ago they weren't particularly powerful or organized, until the coming of a kind of Messiah, according to this Arab—one who was prophesied, one of whom O-Seeah-do had said, '*Na me yo kol*' "

" 'He is a son of my flesh,' " I translated. "I'm not so rusty as I thought I was. Ewe lingo I guess. But what's the O-Seeah something? That gets me."

"The Lord of the Snakes."

"That's the same phrase Thorpe mentioned," chipped in Hardwicke, "in that last conversation."

"That's true," I assented.

"To continue," went on Billy after relighting his cigar, "the fellow reported that throughout this country all species of snakes and lizards were sacred; that it was death penalty to kill or touch one."

"Glory!" said I. "I'll cut out alcohol before I get there!"

"Me, too," said Hardwicke, grinning.

"Can it!" snapped Billy. "We wore that joke to rags before we got back to Juby. Anyway the Arab assured the French captain that the Messiah guy had been turned from a snake into a man somewhere in a swamp down south in order to save the country—the usual salvation theory of all races.

"Anyway since his arrival nobody save a Mohammedan or a member of the snake cult had ever returned from the country. What happened to them Vèron couldn't find out, as he wasn't a snakeite an' couldn't give the proper dope. He also—the Arab I mean—spoke of the extraordinary riches of the country, which corroborated your pal's diary."

"Oh," said I, "probably he's some wise guy who has heard what usually happens when civilization walks in and wants to keep the goods for the people, meaning himself—and I don't know that I blame him."

"Still it seems a pity, with such a lot of deserving people about," commented Hardwicke slyly.

"I guess I'm with you," agreed Billy, smiling. "But to go on. This is about all he could get out of that Arab, but as he came farther north he got hints here and there—evidently as Thorpe did from that chief he was so fond of. Perhaps the Frenchman passed through the same village. Most of the yarns were legendary, but probably based on some sort of fact—a sort of balled-up Mohammedan theology and native folk lore.

"One, which he told us, was that a long time ago—once-upon-a-time business—a son of Mohammed was sent by Mohammed to convert all the tribes of Africa. He traveled through the North successfully proselytizing, where he took for his second and favorite wife—apparently the first lady had stopped home—a daughter of the Berbers, who had a son by him. They came on South, and as they were passing through a dense forest they were set upon by demons.

"When the fight was desperate and the demons had captured the girl and the kid, and were about to kill the old man, an enormous serpent appeared and called out to know what was the trouble. Might

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have seemed an unnecessary question, but I guess the old man was too busy to notice that.

"Anyway when the great snake had gotten it into his head he offered to rescue the wife and child on condition that he permit him to swallow him. The Shareef O-Seeah-do accepted the terms and was duly swallowed. Mighty queer how all these legends resemble each other; get the same ideas like the flood and Adam and Eve balled up. Ever noticed it?

"The old guy was swallowed and the lady and the boy went on happily ever after, and he or she—these legends are never very clear on matrimonial matters—became the founder of the Mazatlanzi race—that is why to kill or even touch the snakes is tabu, for clearly their ancestor, O-Seeah-do, was inside him or them; that is why, Vèron found out, they call the lord of snakes after him.

"However, some time after, some sort of a local Billy Sunday made a prophecy that O-Seeah-do would come back again in the form of a man, to regenerate the race, in which apparently the pastor guy had the luck, for sure enough shortly afterward appeared the present sultan—*á la* Jonah—from the belly of a snake."

"Interesting," said I, "like those Mahdi yarns. But what about the Ophir stunt? Did he get any line on that?"

"No," said Billy with a grin, "and we didn't want him to either. He's white all right, but he might talk when he's full of wine back in Paris. Fieldmorre's a hog on ancient lore—Royal Geographical and all that—and I know a little myself. Your friend Thorpe, in spite of his professorship, is off the trail—I mean as far as Zimbabwe goes.

"Lately it's been pretty conclusively proved by Randall MacIver that Zimbabwe is quite a sucking infant—merely three or four hundred years old—in comparison to what she'd have to be to run for these honors, and also that there isn't, and never was, enough gold to have fitted up old Solomon and Company's wholesale orders. The Arabian theory was busted long ago.

"Now, where's my thimble and the pea? Guess where it is. Look at the situation of our empire. 'Scuse me, gentlemen, if I'm a bit previous! In the Sudan and right at the back door of Egypt; probably the land of Punt, of which their records talk a lot of gold and ivory, ostrich-feathers and slaves. That's good enough for me to take a chance on anyway."

"Glory!" said I. "The way you talk you'd convince a man from Missouri! But I'm with you. Any old way we've got to dig Thorpe out. But who's the president of the outfit now? We don't seem to get any farther as to discovering who the fellow is?"

"That's true, but it doesn't seem to matter much who he is," returned Billy. "Our sole concern was how we could get in."

"Wonder your captain didn't have a shy as he could sling the lingo like a native."

"I told you," snapped Billy, as if I were impugning the courage of his friend, "that he wanted to; but besides being on duty he wasn't plumb dippy, and neither were we. You've had enough African and other experience, Phil, to know the difference between a fool stunt and taking a chance. He was no tenderfoot, Vèron.

"I got a hunch that he was right, and so did Fieldmorre. Sabah wanted to go on, and as a Syrian and a genuine Mohammedan—although he'd quit practising—he might have got away with it; but we decided that he was too valuable to risk at that stage. He's scouting around the Ma-el-Einen country now, and he's due at Juby in September."

"All right, don't get sore, Billy," I returned. "It's no use butting into an outfit like this without getting things straight. What about Vèron?"

"VÈRON didn't succeed in getting any further information that was of any practical use except by way of the persistent corroboration of all the scraps of yarns he picked up, fairly showing that there's something to it. We decided to quit, and made suitable excuses to old man Ma-el-Einen with a view to keeping in with him; promised him a whole bunch of guns and junk from England, as he'll be very valuable unless he gets fresh at the sight of our little outfit. He might do that through sheer scare, thinking we were trying to put something over on him. We've foreseen that and intend to provide for misunderstandings."

"Would be darned awkward," I commented; "for if he did, our lines of communication with Juby would be closed, wouldn't they?"

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"More or less, but we'll have to chance that. We could get out, or perhaps establish a base farther south, between Juby and Porto El Oro, if necessary. Fieldmorre told me there's lots of convenient lagoons around there, although it wouldn't be as convenient as Juby."

"But what about Thorpe? You don't know for sure that he's gone under?"

"Don't for sure. But it looks mighty like it. Vèron was dead positive. None of the others ever came out. Look at the date when the last entry in the diary was written. Two years and more."

"Darn it!" I objected. "I disappeared for thundering nigh three years along with my Mahdi friends."

"Maybe. Perhaps this school pal of yours is doing similar stunts."

"Hope not," said I feelingly. "Rather know he's dead, poor ——. Anyway if he is, I reckon we ought to have a shy at pulling him out of the muss."

"And the others," chipped in Hardwicke.

"You bet! But—say, who's in this outfit beside you two?"

"Fieldmorre, Vèron and Sabah. Fieldmorre's hunting dough and a boat on the other side."

"How much do you reckon you want?"

"About fifty thousand dollars. But we haven't got it all yet. Mighty difficult to get folk to cough up yellow-backs without seeing something tangible—figures, samples, diamonds or something."

"Sure, I know lots come from Missouri. How much are you shy?"

"About twenty thousand."

"I can throw that in. Now, what's the plan?"

"Dig up some good boys—about a dozen whites, I reckon; and recruit a bunch of Hausa—about a couple of hundred. Good scrappers and well disciplined. Have to be done quietly, else we'll get consuls and other inquisitive folk shoving their noses in. Guns—machine and rifles—Fieldmorre's practically fixed on the other side. Load 'agricultural machinery and pianos' for the West Coast.

"He's got an option on a fore-and-aft schooner, thousand gross tonnage, which will suit us fine. Load in England, pick up the crowd at Funchal and Las Palmas—and then better perhaps run down first and hunt Hausa here and there. Daren't try for the whole bunch in one port."

"But," I objected, "how in thunder d'you think you're going to clear the ship from an English port——"

Billy grinned.

"Leave that to me, old dear. She'll sail under the house flag of a regular company, registered and everything, trading between Liverpool and the West Coast of Africa. The Ophir Empire Exploitation, Exploring, Trading and Mining Company. Articles of association drawn up. Wonderful word that, 'exploitation'—covers every mortal thing you can think of from hawking boot-laces to pinching empires. That's to cover all contingencies, and the other two to put 'em off the trail. Offices, 145 Water Street, Liverpool. Got board table, chairs, a typewriter and an office girl. Directors: The Right Honorable Viscount Fieldmorre, F. R. S., F. R. G. S., R. N. R."

"Glory!" I exclaimed. "Sounds like a broadside from a British dreadnought!"

"Good as. We'd have had it American 'cept for that darned Monroe doctrine. Might give somebody a chance to pull Uncle Sam's own stuff on him. Then there's plain me, Hardwicke here, you and Sabah—Vèron, I had to let him in, naturally. He's going to get twelve months' vacation and join us. Useful man anyway—but for professional reasons he can't appear in the directorate. With your whack of dough we'll control the board; and you'll control us, I guess. Tomorrow I'll send a cable to Fieldmorre, and in twenty-four hours the good ship *Penguin* will be in commission."

"Why don't you charter a boat?"

"Thought of that. Too dangerous. Have to have complete control. 'Sides, we'll have to be a registered company for political protection. Doped all that out from what I fell into over the Temple of Baal and the Moroccan concession. If you don't, then Britain or France will just swallow you whole."

"That's true, I guess. But what about your skipper? You'll have to find some one who won't blab."

"Fieldmorre's skipper as well as president. Has an extra-master's ticket, and moreover he's lieutenant in the R. N. R."

Billy grinned.

"Some royal lieutenant, believe me!" he added.

"Say, guess I've a mate's."

"So has Hardwicke here. But yours will

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be American and no good under the British flag. But we can shove in a dummy and you'll do the work, huh?"

"But what's the idea in going through Juby?"

"As near a route to our country as anywhere else; and it's mighty lonely. Daren't attempt it where gunboats and other craft are monkeying around."

"That's right sure," I admitted. "But what're you going to do with the old tub while we're busy up-country? Who's going to look after her?"

"Send her home with a scratch crew from the islands and charter her for short voyages. That's what the Liverpool office is for. Six months later, or whenever we wish—we'll have a small lugger at Lanzarotte for mails—she'll be chartered for say Walfisch Bay, report islands, and then hang off Juby for orders."

"Seems you've worked it out some," said I.

"You bet we have," agreed Billy, grinning. "Come fill those glasses, and bottoms up! To the Ophir Empire Exploitation, Exploring, Trading and Mining Company!"

V

AND the Ophir Empire Exploitation, Exploring, Trading and Mining Company came true all right, as they say in the story books. We spent a fortnight in New York, mostly in Billy's rooms, waiting for telegrams from various boys whom we knew to have more or less the same streak of insanity as we had, coupled, when possible, with some tropical experience, preferably African.

No easy job; for our breed aren't given to correspondence to any extent, not so's you notice, nor to indulging in permanent addresses—and on such an outfit the man may be as rough-neck as he chooses, but he's got to be white all through—no crazy guys who are liable to develop bug-house symptoms in the middle of the desert need apply. Moreover, some fell by the wayside, as it were, and pleaded, as the guests in the Good Book did, that they were going, or mostly had gone, to a wedding feast.

However, we managed, between the three of us, to locate five, in addition to the three whom Billy and Hardwicke had collected before I had butted in. We picked up a couple, but we couldn't afford to waste time by waiting for the others who had to come from Canada and Alaska, so, cabling them the sinews of bloody war and simple instructions to foregather at certain hotels in Funchal and Las Palmas—always wise to keep 'em from talking too much together—we caught the first boat for Liverpool.

Fieldmorre turned out to be a white man, as I might have known he would be if Billy had had anything to do with him. Half-bald, husky fellow, with an Irish nose and eyes, he looked like a Bowery tough with no collar and a cap; some aristocrat. No slouch either. He'd been busy, too.

He'd debated whether to get papers as a private yacht cruising between Great Britain and the southern Atlantic. Heap of advantages in that, and easily fixed for a millionaire or a viscount even when he ain't got money of his own; but "frightfully difficult," as he put it, "to account for unreasonable quantities of pianos, plows and things. One plows the sea and poets talk about the—er—music of the ocean, but— Well, I decided we'd better go in for trade. What do you fellows think?"

'Smatter of fact, as Billy would say, he'd fixed things through the biggest shipping firm running south. Why didn't the Lord give me a title? With a handle to fool the fools and democratic ideas to fool the wise I'd be emperor of— Oh, ——, I guess I might have had a hop dream around that time.

THE *Penguin* was already in commission. We went down to see her. Old, but a darned good sea boat from her lines. I felt an ancient guy as I padded around her, smelling this and that, sea memories coming as thick as the tang from the river. Fieldmorre's eyes twinkled as he saw me watching the large cases being slung aboard right in the middle of Liverpool.

"We hope to develop a large trade in agricultural implements," he remarked dryly.

"Sure," I agreed, "and I guess the west Africans are some music lovers!" eying another great crate swinging on a crane.

I own I got jumpy when the actual time came for clearing-papers; but, as I had hinted, Fieldmorre had fixed that. Titles are useful sometimes in the western hemisphere as well as elsewhere, I've noticed.

Just before feeling the heave beneath my feet—the first for many a long day, for

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a steam kettle is never the same as a real ship—Billy got a line from Vèron in Paris saying that he was leaving for Mogador, utilizing governmental privileges, and would join us either at Funchal or Las Palmas, or possibly travel overland for the aforesaid reasons—and meet us at Juby.

Yet, honest to goodness, I felt like a kid with a shirt full of apples sneaking out of an orchard until the tug cast off and the halyards began to sing. It was mighty fine, that run out, yarning and trying to work out the future—like a witch-doctor over the guts of a chicken, as Fieldmorre put it—in the cuddy, or pacing the poop. For those who know the breed—I don't give a ——— whether he's Eskimo or Fuzzzy Wuzzzy—a man is or he ain't.

The first days on such a venture are as heavy as a pack at the end of a trail; the reaching out, sizing-up of your mates, if you get what I mean. "He travels the farthest who travels alone," I think Kipling said. Yet I guess there was something he didn't know; for of all the fine things right on this little whirling ball we call the earth, the best is a good white pal. Maybe he was right; but I don't know it, and if so it must be mighty like being good—awful lonesome.

Funchal was our first port of call, where we picked up four of the crowd collected in the States; nice boys too; two Irish-Americans, Casey and O'Donnell, a French-Canadian, Poiteau, and a Poliszkwi, a three-generation man.

At Las Palmas, waiting for us on the mole, bless 'em, stiff with boredom, were the other couple, Barnard and Hibbert, two Anglo-Saxons—one man ex-captain and the other a sergeant—suffering from their racial weakness. The six, with the bunch we brought with us—Sarkard and Peters, who'd both sweated and cussed in the Zone and most parts of the tropics; and the four recruited in England, Seeger, a medico, late of the Sudan Service, Broughton and Famitty, who'd seen military service in Nigeria and South Africa, and Pexton, who was a kind of lost soul, a mixture between a naturalist, a botanist and a painter, a small, wiry, swarthy fellow. Welsh I think—made up the dozen.

Hardwicke and Broughton left us for Juby, charged to buy up eighteen riding dromedaries for the white party and Sabah the Syrian, and pack-animals.

As is usual in such cases, a hitch occurred. As we were going to make a run for Accra, where the water is notoriously bad, we decided to fill up our tanks, which held us over for a couple of days.

The first night the officers—that's us—went ashore and trailed up in the tram to the town in search of a dinner—Billy's fault. We had the dinner, but the toasts—considerably later—were interrupted. Do you know Las Palmas? Well—we found the men—they'd had leave; the last, believe me!—in the middle of "the most gorgeous row," as Fieldmorre put it, "as ever happened on the Barbary Coast."

As we entered, the racket was—reminiscent, I guess. I got a vision of the scene.

Our darlings—again Fieldmorre's words—heavily armed with wine-bottles, table legs and chairs, were in joyous mixup with many small people sporting gold lace, knives and a few pistols. Under the kerosene lamp hung from the middle of the dive was our little Welsh painter, botanist etcetera, beating up a stout person entirely surrounded with gold lace and medals.

A little to the right was a hatchet-faced guy sitting on a table like a conductor conducting an orchestra, and on his lap—I blinked; the Spanish wine is mighty strong—was a small kind of dog, looking like a cross between a dachshund and a French poodle.

"Splendid fellows," murmured Fieldmorre admiringly. "This man here," indicating our botanist-painter, "seems quite a useful fellow."

"Maybe you're right, Fieldy," snapped Billy, "but I reckon we'd best close 'em down, just for our own good."

"Me too," said I, "speaking *ex officio*."

How these darn Britishers ruin your speech!

"*Ex officio*," agreed Fieldmorre politely. "I agree with you. You look after our taffy, William, and we'll manage the crew."

Billy—*alias* William—sailed in and caught the naturalist by the shoulders, and, whirling him away from his specimen, jerked the feet from under the incensed *capitano* and deposited him ignominiously upon the floor. This I glimpsed as with Fieldmorre we butted through the jabbering throng toward our own men, swearing good and hard.

As soon as discipline—meaning unreasonable force for the police and reasonable force for our own fold—had restored order,

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the small guy on the table hugging the small dog butted in.

"GENTLEMEN," he called out, "I congratulate the British Empire!"

Somehow or other nobody seemed to have noticed him—probably too busy—but the words, strident in the comparative calm, got home.

"Say, mister," yelled a voice, obvious in origin, "is that meaning me?"

Avoiding the authoritative arm of the skipper, out stepped carroty-headed, thick-set Casey, and beside him leaped another man as like as his twin.

"Hold yer gob!" shouted O'Donnell. "'Tis me the lousy ——'s after calling names!"

"That'll do, men," commanded the old man, standing in front of them. "Tromp, old man, just talk to this chap. William, d'you mind bolting that door? Come on you blighters; shut up, and don't be silly! There's plenty of trouble ahead if you want it."

The two Irish glared, rebellion in their eyes. Billy, starting on the way to bolt the door, turned:

"You darned sons o' Saint Patrick an' all his holy angels, don't you know the old man's more Irish than you are? Get out, you scuts!"

For a moment the two stared at Fieldmorre. He smiled while his blue eyes hardened.

"You're drunk, bhoys," he said quietly, "and sure I love ye for it. Will ye be quiet now!"

Then, turning his back on them, he asked me calmly—

"Well, who is this—er—gentleman here?"

As a matter of fact I hadn't taken any notice of the—er—gentleman here. I had been interested solely in a fear that had sprung up of the warring elements among the whites of the expedition, as I had had already experience of such. However, I was now well satisfied that Fieldmorre could play the skipper, and as Casey and O'Donnell grinned and, muttering, stepped back, I knew that all was right; and, turning from our bunch, rediscovered the man with the little dog and demanded purposely—

"Say, mister, guess I didn't get you?"

"*Ach!*" said he quickly. "I ask your pardon! You are an American—I——"

"Don't let that worry you. Who in —— are you, and what're you doing up here anyway when a decent row's going on?"

He had sharp and small eyes, that guy, I noticed, as he gave Fieldmorre the once-over. I had another look at him. Small, wiry, fair, red tie, in a small cap and mean suit that looked like Whitechapel. I don't mean that the clothes made the man, but in this case the man seemed to have made the suit, if you get me. The sharp eyes darted from me to Fieldmorre, then to Billy, busy over by the door, and then to our bunch standing in a heap. He stroked his doll dog.

"I'm an old resident here and—" looking at Fieldmorre—"I thought you were off a Breetish man-o'-war."

"In mufti, no doubt," murmured Fieldmorre. "Well?"

"Nothing at all, sir. I am a student of life."

"Student of ——!" bawled one of our gang.

"Say, look here," interposed Billy, "we're going quietly home, but if you want trouble—. You get me?"

Off came the little cap, and the owner replied—

"As you wish, sir; I but remark——"

His dog barked shrilly at that moment, producing a guffaw from our crowd.

"You remark too much, sir," retorted Billy. "Good night."

Fieldmorre smiled as he said, turning—

"Come on, you chaps."

As he went off in the hired launch for the *Penguin* I felt mighty easy. The drunken crowd were singing; but I knew that we were—well, knitted, I guess, is the best word.

By agreement Fieldmorre was skipper. My first thought had been, could he command a bunch such as ours were? I'd got my answer. I know I ain't great at taking orders from another, and our crowd wasn't used to it an' all that; but with Billy and Fieldy it differed a heap. When we got aboard that night I felt like a husband well mated—and I know what that means.

"Some bunch," as Billy remarked in the cuddy afterward.

"They are," agreed the old man, "and I wouldn't give a —— for 'em if they weren't. That little Welshman—botanist or painter, isn't he?—and those two carroty-headed sons of——"

His blue eyes sparkled, and the fringe of his half-bald head twitched.

"Let's send 'em a double tot of rum and —Steward! What do you fellows think? And a bottle of dry fizz for the health—I'm

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superstitious, y'know—for the health of the ship?"

Sitting in the cuddy that night with the lamp burning under a skylight—while the sea danced a grave pavan—sure I've dabbled with music as well as women—outside the porthole—maybe I was drunk, but not with alcohol, but with love of a good ship and comrades.

But we hadn't seen the last of our friend sitting on the table. He turned up the very next morning while we were cussing because a lighter with the last tank of water had got adrift. He was more dolled up than before, I noticed, as he pranced up the gangway, and he'd left his little dog at home.

"Good morning," said he in the perfect accent of a foreigner.

"Good morning," said I as first mate.

"I wish to see the master."

"Right," said I, and led him to the cabin, where the skipper was playing chess with the supercargo—on paper.

"Yes," said Fieldmorre, looking up.

"*Bon jour, monseigneur.* If you permit me," continued the man, "I present myself, the Baron Bertouche."

"Speak English if you please," interrupted Fieldmorre politely.

"Certainly—or German or Italian or Spanish, if your lordship wishes," returned the stranger insolently.

Fieldmorre glanced at me. Billy was abstractedly shifting the chess-pieces about. There was an almost imperceptible smile on his face.

"D'you mind throwing the baron overboard?" Fieldy said quietly.

Billy looked up and grinned interestedly.

"Sure," said I, I fear with much feeling.

The baron's eyes became smallish. He looked at me stupidly as if to weigh me. I felt as if he'd asked me whether I could swim. I said—

"You'd better!"

He seemed to think so too; bowed, while Fieldmorre stared coldly and Billy grinned, and then followed me to the gangway.

At the creak of dawn we sailed for Accra.

VI

I HAD rather wondered at Fieldmorre's high-handed manner with the stranger at Las Palmas, but as he knew those waters and was skipper to boot, I naturally waited until an opportunity occurred to find out, which was one evening when we were watching Sirius just over the horizon from the poop.

"Oh, the baron's well known around here and Morocco," he replied, in answer to some odd reference, "where he's known among the people as *Sid el Kelceb*."

"The master of the little dog!" commented Billy. "Because of that mutt he carries around?"

"Yes. He carts that cur all over the shop; even used to have a kind of kennel for the brute rigged on his horse or camel. In northern Morocco he's finished, practically. Every blessed Arab knows him too well—to his cost—the Moors I mean. Even Bibi Starleton. I picked him up on my first trip here; found the bold bad baron in Funchal teaching languages.

"Perfectly true that he can speak German, Italian, Spanish, French, English, besides his own language, Danish. No doubt that's why I hired the blighter as an Arabic interpreter, possibly the only language he can't speak," added Fieldmorre, with his silent laugh.

"I'd chartered a small schooner, the *St. Paul*, loaded trade goods; and I took him with me. I called in at Mogador to look up a Moor whom I'd met on my road out for the latest information regarding Juby. Fortunately for me we stopped there a few days, at the end of which, my Moor gave me a tip and I shunted Master Baron thunderin' quick.

"It appeared that he'd been busy on board working up a nice little plot with some other cutthroats among the crew whom he knew, to slit my throat and heave me overboard on the trip, and then to pinch the cargo, scuttle the *St. Paul*—for they daren't have stuck to her in those waters—and skedaddle to pastures new, so to speak."

"He's got a cast-iron nerve to show up in Las Palmas then," I commented.

"Not he. He knew well enough I couldn't prove anything against him. And he'd nerve enough probably to think that he could blackmail me or something. How he lives now I don't know. Shouldn't be surprized if he's still in with Mannesman, the Hamburg people. They tried to get all the mining concessions in Morocco, you know."

Under the pretense of coastwise trading, we picked up our bunch of Hausa at various ports, all ex-soldiers. Fortunately, in these waters, official folk are mostly too sun

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and whisky soaked to be over-curious, so that we didn't bump trouble. We had fair weather for this time of the year, and within six weeks came slapping back under the trade winds.

The first sight you get of Juby is the spot of the old fort-factory, for the land beyond is as flat as the palm of your hand. Rather open for anchorage, but protected by a reef through which Fieldmorre—I believe he and one other are about the only humans who know the passage—conned us prettily. As we dropped anchor, a noticeable bustle was remarked on the beach in front of the small village, and on the fort fluttered a Union Jack.

The three of us went ashore, Fieldmorre, Billy and I. We found Hardwicke and Broughton and Sabah, but Vèron had not turned up, although we were already some ten days overdue.

This seemed strange, as we had had a wire at Las Palmas, dating his departure from Mogador, and since then he had had more than enough time to reach Juby overland.

However, there was nothing to be done. Hardwicke and Broughton had, mainly with Sabah's assistance, done excellently well in getting beasts. But Sabah, according to Billy and Fieldmorre, had altered, seemingly mighty depressed that he hadn't been able to scout any information worth having all the time he had been around Ma-el-Einen, from whom he had brought presents and pretty phrases which at any rate sounded well.

Anyway we got busy discharging and humping the cargo on to the beach—some long and tiresome job with only the ship's boats and the few native punts we could scare up. Our fellows, even the orthodox crew, no doubt wondered what in the name of Heaven these savages wanted with agricultural machinery and pianos, for none of these cases were opened until the *Penguin* had put to sea.

Everything had gone like clockwork. The Hausa, hungry for any excuse—all worked up at the promise of blood and imaginary loot—drilled and practised at improvised rifle-butts like sons of guns; and our fellows were just fine—none quicker on the jump than Fieldmorre's two compatriots, Casey and O'Donnell. Although we expected Vèron any day, he did not show up.

Knowing well that the news of the landing would have spread up-country and be discussed in the bazaars of towns, we hurried things, but it was ten days later—no doubt to the astonishment of Allah's local followers—when, on October 26th, the column took the trail, two hundred and fifty strong, including servants and camp-followers.

Naturally, coming to clear grips with the real thing, we talked our heads off, discussing the pros and cons of the venture over the camp-fire at night, and read and reread every word of Thorpe's tragic diary. Another point of more immediate concern was Ma-el-Einen's reception. If he should choose to get fresh at the sight of our little army, we'd have a fight on our hands right there or before. Sabah still appeared, if not sullen, sulky about something; and his manner seemed hard to fit in with the theory of disappointment; yet the man himself I rather cottoned to.

However, we jogged along day after day with never a sight of a possible enemy. Not even the nomad Tuareg who had hustled Billy and Fieldmorre on their first trip broke the monotony.

OLD man Ma-el-Einen's hang-out was a walled town, almost a village, perched on the only bit of a hill in the country, close to a *donga*, as we call 'em down south; that is, a dry course—dry, except by digging—for eleven months out of the year and then it gets wet only thanks to the melting of the snows on the distant Atlas Mountains. From his attitude when he received the three of us you would have thought we and our crazy expedition were no more to him than some old camel-driver limping in on the Sudan trail.

He accepted presents and returned—some—and listened to our demands for assistance in the shape of fodder and water with the same "I'm - in - heaven - chinning-with - the - Prophet - run - away - and don't-bother" expression of a *pukka* saint.

Naturally we tried all we knew to get some information out of the old man or his boys, but, just as Billy had complained, they either ignored the questions or swore by Allah and the Prophet they had never heard of any such country. You couldn't give 'em the lie, as it was feasible that they, being interested only in the Sudan trail, which passed a long way to the north of our goal, and not being curious folk, didn't know or care a fig what tribes, except for

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raiding, were below them. Seemed queer, though, all the same.

While we were resting over a few days a holy man—dervish kind of guy—wandered into the town. We struck him first when we were coming back from the last interview with the old boy, who got quite affable—if you could imagine a stone Buddha affable—and sent extra presents after us with special recommendations to the care of Allah.

He—the dervish, not the pope—was busy shouting and foaming at the mouth and mussing around with a bunch of snakes before a solemn crowd. As we pulled up to rubber he screamed louder than ever, and, catching one snake, rammed it into his mouth and appeared to swallow it, darned near making me sick on the spot.

This same crazy guy turned up in camp and did similar stunts, much to the admiration of our Hausa, who, native-like, thought he was great stuff as a holy man. When we struck camp a few days later, Billy Sunday, as our Billy had irreverently nicknamed him, took it into his holy nut to come along too. For reasons of native policy, as Fieldmorre put it, we didn't hoof him out. Anyway, except for raising fanatical mania—as I knew his kidney among the Mahdi—he seemed a harmless loony.

Fieldmorre and Billy were still considerably worried that Vèron had not turned up. Had he been unable to come by reason of sickness, he could have sent a messenger. They began to fear that he'd struck trouble on the road, but without details we couldn't attempt anything.

After Ma-el-Einen's village the going was fierce; not so much for us on dromedaries but for the Hausa, who were unused to the ankle-gripping sand of the Sahara. The fifth night out we struck a better trail, left the desert proper and found a bare and rocky plateau.

That night, as we were sitting round the fire of camel or dromedary dung, the headman of the pack-team came up and jabbered away with Sabah in Shilhah. Sabah, looking more dismal than ever, reported that five dromedaries were sick with a sickness that they did not know.

This seemed rotten luck. We went across and had a look at them, and they surely looked down and out, three of them crouched camel fashion with their heads on the sand. None of us knew anything about the dromedary—the only thing we could do was to cuss and pray. All five were dead the following morning; and on the top of that, seven men turned up complaining of pains in their tummies. The loads were spread over the other pack-animals, and we got under way a little late.

During the march that day the seven sick men became worse, and at the midday halt Seeger reported that each had a high temperature, but he couldn't satisfactorily diagnose the trouble—an acute diarrhea, yet he was sure that it wasn't dysentery. That night three more dromedaries and five more men were on the sick list. Eight beasts put out of mess began to complicate the transport. We held a powwow, but couldn't arrive at any solution, either as to a remedy or as to the cause of the trouble, and the misfortune began to make us a bit down in the mouth.

The next day two men died; four more and three animals went sick. Sabah looked like a half-plucked sick hen. Next morning, as we delayed to let their comrades bury them, two others pegged out, which held us up for the day. Also I noticed that our Hausa, real fine fellows ordinarily but as subject to superstition as most, were beginning to mutter among themselves.

"Glory," thought I, "if they get a bug in their heads that we're bewitched, then there'll be the —— to pay."

Billy and Fieldmorre knew this as well as I did, but we didn't say anything. In three days we lost another seven dromedaries, had eleven men dead and fourteen sick on our hands. Queer part was that none of the usual remedies seemed to have any effect; forty drops of laudanum only deadened the pain somewhat.

The look of the Hausa I didn't like at all; even the loony holy man had quit snake-swallowing and sat fakir fashion 'most all the time in camp, regarding Allah or somebody. I had kept my eye on that guy, too, watching out for any attempt at stirring them up against the infidel.

That night we talked long and seriously. We almost prayed in a way for a happy band of Tuareg to come and pay a visit, just to cheer up the Hausa and distract their attention. But around this forsaken district never a moving thing was seen save away up sometimes a prowling vulture or a stray eagle from the Atlas. The country

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ahead looked like petering out into sheer sand again, so that night we filled all the waterskins—not as many as we had had, for lack of transport.

The following afternoon, as we were swaying along, I suddenly felt dizzy; came over like a wave and passed. About an hour afterward I got it again, accompanied by a cold sweat, with a griping pain which doubled me up.

"Oh, my ——," thought I, "it's got me."

But it passed again. Fieldmorre, who was riding close beside me, I saw suddenly bite his lip and crouch slightly.

"Say, are you feeling bad, skipper?" I called out.

He straightened up.

"Oh, nothing at all," he replied with a smile.

I urged my beast up alongside him.

"You look mighty white about the gills anyway," I continued.

"So do you," he retorted, grinning. "heat probably. This sun's infernal. You know," he went on, "I've been looking up that French map and I half think we ought to bear a couple of points more to the southward to strike the wells which are supposed to be there."

"You're navigating officer," I replied, "so I guess it's up to you."

"Well, William agrees, so I suppose we'd better shift——"

Another spasm took him and myself at the same moment.

"We've both got it, I guess," I said when we had recovered.

"I'm afraid so," he admitted, grimacing, and hailed the nearest man, who happened to be Casey, to shout for the doc. We loaded up then and there with laudanum, enough to get to camp without rolling off our beasts—and even then that was some —— trip.

That night I admit I didn't know anything about the expedition, nor did I care. I seemed to be able to keep enough head on me to swear and insist that I wouldn't cash in, for sometimes I surely felt like it.

One day I was Phil Tromp once more and could sit up and take notice. At first I couldn't make out what the heaving glare of white light could be; then I figured out the sand and began to wonder where I was. Finally I discovered that I was mewed up in a kind of wicker basket slung on the side of my dromedary.

I lay—or was huddled—a long time squaring things, kind of getting my bearings in this world again. I tried to sit up, and found out how darned weak I was. Presently I saw Billy's face come swimming out of heaven.

"Fine!" said I. "How's Fieldmorre?"

"Just about as fine as you are, old boy," returned Billy dryly. "You've both had a rough passage, believe me."

"Oh, sure I do!" I assured him.

Billy grinned.

"That's the whichaway!"

I peeked out of my trap at the caravan sprawling over the sands.

"Lordy!" I exclaimed. "Is that Vèron over there?"

"Sure it's Vèron. He overtook us about a week ago."

"A—a week?"

"Yes; you've been bad about ten days. Vèron overtook us, and then we began to see things."

"What do you mean?"

"That crazy Billy Sunday guy's been poisoning the animals and men ever since he joined us at Ma-el-Einen's, and even sticking holes in the waterskins. Vèron was captured by Tuareg, with a caravan he was traveling with, and this guy gave him away as a Christian. They started in to fix him; but Vèron—he's some boy!—stole one of their fastest camels and made a bee-line to cut our trail, which he did."

"And the dervish guy?"

"Shot—*pronto*."

VII

I GUESS I was sicker than I thought, for I didn't realize for a few days that Billy was treating both Fieldmorre and me as convalescents; kind of slops and quiet, don't let him talk too much, nurse. Most of the time I slept, either in my wicker cage or in camp—so did Fieldmorre—the why of our comparative rapid recovery I reckoned. Then I got wise to the fact that something was wrong by a chance conversation overheard between Hibbert and Famitty.

"Don't like it at all, I don't," the former remarked. "What the —— did the old man let that marabout blighter come along for? Might ha' known."

"Guess he knows what he's doin'," insisted Famitty loyally. "These Mohammedan guys get mighty sore if you muss about with their holy guys."

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"Go on," retorted Hibbert; "I know 'em. I ain't spent ten years on the Somali coast for nothing. Don't like this 'ere Frenchie either, if you ask me. He's too 'igh and mighty for me. Thinks he knows everything."

"Aw, cut it out," growled Famitty. "You don't get a word he says anyway. But he sure knows these Hausa fellows and the country around these parts. The only thing that keeps me guessing is about the shooting of that snake-swallower. Don't do to try fool stunts with these guys."

"That's what I'm gettin' at!" snapped Hibbert. "Ought to have shoved him out into the desert and let him chase 'isself, that's what I say."

They went on arguing, but what they had already said had made me sit up. Not the attitude of criticism; for, knowing men more or less, I was sure that whatever they thought, either man would stick right through if any real trouble began. But Hibbert had dangerous makings, being, as there is in almost any crew, a kind of sea-lawyer.

However, that woke me up to the fact that the holy man had started something, corroborated soon by the remarks of a couple of our Hausa who were quarreling—about what I didn't get, but evidently to do with this darned dervish. The Hausa, I knew, are about forty per cent. Mohammedan, forty per cent. pagan and the rest nothing in particular, but all doped with superstition, magic witchcraft, and the like.

That night, probably because I was stirred up, I noticed a certain kind of awkwardness, or thought I did, around the fire; and I got a bit riled—foolishly I knew—because Fieldmorre was evidently pressed into service to translate for Billy and Vèron. I didn't realize until some time afterward what a nasty mess Billy must have been in. As he couldn't speak French he had to fall back on Arabic to talk with Vèron or otherwise use Sabah as interpreter. I wasn't happy at all that night when I turned in; for the most dangerous thing that could happen on such an expedition was dissension in any form by misunderstanding or fool jealousy.

Next day we were passing through a forsaken piece of country of scrub and sand and shale, more desolate than the real desert. I rode alongside Billy and asked him, bluffing gaiety, what was the trouble. At first he shied. I spoke straight.

"Say here, Billy, cut out the nursie business. Maybe I'm not fit yet in my body, but my think-tank's working overtime. Something's wrong. What is it?"

"That's right, Phil, there is; but I don't quite know what's the matter. The best thing that I could think up was for you—and Fieldmorre—to get fit, but while you were sick, filling you up with trouble wouldn't help you any."

"What is the trouble? Vèron?"

"No. That darned dervish. You remember when we decided to let him come along to keep our native bunch quiet. We all agreed on that. 'Smatter of fact, the only thing I was scared of was that he might start religious trouble."

"Same here," said I.

"But I never reckoned on the poisoning stunt. For one reason I couldn't find a motive, and I'm darned if I can now."

"Except natural religious prejudice. Probably he betrayed Vèron out of similar cussedness."

"Uh! Uh! Mighty awkward, Vèron showing up when you two went sick. Don't know a darn word of French—not enough to talk—and——"

"I know. But get to the meat."

"The point is that there's some trouble among the Hausa. Vèron knows it, too. He reckons, according to Fieldy, that it's just the usual squabble between the Mohammedans and the pagans. But I doubt it. I've got a hunch that darned snake-swallowing swine put some bug in their heads purposely."

I agreed, although I didn't hammer on the fact. I shifted over later and had a chat with Fieldmorre. He was much to my way of thinking. That evening we talked out around the fire. We decided to keep the various factions apart as much as possible by dividing them into watches. There was no open sedition, but just the simmer of discontent resulting in sudden flurries of disputes, the Mohammedans inclining to spit at the others and they becoming naturally resentful. But the point I chewed on was: If the dervish had started this—for what purpose?

According to the skipper we were due for another stretch of waterless desert, and then we ought to strike the northern spur of the desolate hills mentioned in Thorpe's

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diary. The next day Hardwicke gave me something more to think about. Riding alongside on the road, he began vaguely talking about things in general when suddenly he came out with—

"D'you know, I wish we hadn't got Vèron in the party?"

"Why?"

"Oh, I don't know. There seems something ruddy queer to me sometimes. What was he doing up beyond so long? Can't quite swallow that yarn about being captured and all that."

"Don't talk bull!" I snapped. "What the blazes d'you think? Didn't he spot that dervish guy and——"

"Yes, I know, but——"

"But what?"

"Well, he's a captain in the French army and it doesn't seem reasonable to me that he's going to help us to pinch this empire for England."

"We're not going to pinch it for England," I retorted, rather riled.

"Oh, yes, we are. The company's English, and anyway we're bound to have a political standing. Officially I mean. We can't stand alone. The Rhodesian or the Niger or the old John Company of India, they're British. Doesn't seem reasonable to me that a Frenchman's going to stand for that. He's either not playing the game to us or to his country."

"By ——, you've started something!" I exclaimed, for I admit that point of view had not struck me. "But why in —— didn't you spit it out before?"

"How could I? Wasn't he in with Fieldmorre and Langster before we came?"

That was true, but I felt mad.

"If you're thinking that way," I snapped, "go and tell Fieldmorre. He's skipper."

"All right," retorted Hardwicke in his English way; "don't get your hair off."

I WAS mad; not with Hardwicke, but at the evident threat of a split among the white leaders as well. And what got me real worried was the fact that Hardwicke's point of view didn't seem unreasonable. After all, thinking it over, I had just taken for granted that Vèron was O. K. merely because he was in with Billy. Still I felt mighty sore and thoughtful that night as I lay staring at the stars and listening to the grumbling of the dromedaries.

This sort of thing gets on your nerves. Maybe I was still sicker than I knew; anyway I began to feel a morose resentment against everybody, and, worse, found myself watching odd people suspiciously and wondering what was going on inside their nuts.

I even started to work up a resentment against Fieldmorre. We'd agreed that he was to be in command, and I was loyal right through; but childishly I began to complain to myself, asking why the blazes didn't he pull everybody together. Then I recollected that I wasn't fair, for both of us had been knocked out of the running for a fortnight, nigh. As I nevertheless was gloomily regarding Sabah drooping over the hump of his animal like a mangy buzzard on a fence, Fieldmorre came alongside.

"Feeling fit, Tromp?" he demanded, and the brisk sound of his voice bucked me up.

"Pretty nigh," I replied.

"Good."

His blue eyes regarded me swiftly.

"William!" he hailed Billy, who was riding a few yards away. "Look here, you fellows," he continued when Billy had joined us, "we've got to pull this crowd together. I don't know whether you'll agree with me, but there's too much idle chatter about."

"That's right," concurred Billy.

"Tromp and I have both been in sick bay, and you, William—forgive my putting it like this— have been rather hobbled by lack of French."

"Lordy, don't I know it!" agreed Billy.

"You chaps have agreed that I'm to be skipper, so it's my job to speak out. Are you with me? Well—you forgive me, Tromp? I know William, because we've been up here before. Frankly, things look —— rotten. As far as we three are concerned—well, we'll play cricket. Of course that's understood. There's a sort of dry rot among us. See?

"Look at Sabah there. Looks like a ruddy sick camel—and other little things. The men have got a touch of it too. Well, we've got to set the pace. I hope you chaps understand?"

"Sure we do."

"Oh, that's all I wanted to say."

Billy and I looked at each other; both wondering at a Celt being as inarticulate as an Anglo-Saxon. Yet we were both Anglo-Saxons!

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"Why did you speak of Sabah, Fieldy?" queried Billy after a moment's silence. "Don't you think he's straight?"

"As far as I know," returned Fieldmorre, "but one must remember, once a Mohammedan always a Mohammedan."

"What d'you mean?" I demanded, thinking, "Oh, Lordy, here's another of 'em!"

"Oh, only that—er—when you're driven down to basic—er—elemental principles, that a Christian's a Christian and a Mohammedan's a Mohammedan."

"Lordy!" thought I. "Why is a piece of string? Because it isn't. Yet——"

However, I got what he meant; but the idea didn't cheer me any. Later, when Billy and I happened to be together, he grinned understandingly. Somehow we both felt better. About an hour later, in the afternoon, when we were looking for a camp site, one of our flankers, Sarkard, came scurrying in with the report that he'd seen a solitary mounted man on the horizon.

"Double the sentries tonight," was Fieldmorre's comment.

However, nothing happened; nor did our folk locate a sign of a living thing for two more days. When we had arrived in sight of the gneiss hills, it came with the rising of the sun as we were in the middle of striking camp.

A picket to the south, posted on a rump of a small hill, suddenly shattered the desert's stillness with the familiar *rat-tat-a-tat* of a Maxim.

"Posts!" shouted Fieldmorre, who was waiting for his beast to kneel, and I swear there was an exultant note in his voice.

"Posts!" shouted Barnard, echoing the tone. "Come along, you fellows. Form square. Recall!" he bellowed as against the scarlet light of the rising sun appeared a shadow of galloping horsemen.

The trumpet of a Hausa squalled harshly.

"Thank the good Lord," I thought as I yelled at my men, who, Mohammedan and pagan, showed not the slightest sign of hesitation. Even the dromedary drivers and camp-followers ran to drive their beasts into the center of the square as they had been drilled.

Casey, with his inseparable half-section, O'Donnell bringing his picket on the run as recalled, yelled exultantly—

"By gob, there's millions of the darlin's, Lord bless 'em!"

Somewhere I heard our botanist-painter screaming—

"Indeed to goodness, if you don't get that ruddy camel out of the way I'll——"

Casey's report was somewhat exaggerated but they certainly came on like locusts, as the prophet might say. Vèron, with his bunch of Hausa, was the first to get in action, as all had orders to reserve their fire until within killing distance. They came from every side at once, in the typical Arab style, yelling like loonies and firing from the saddle. Some of their bullets got home.

One of my men grunted and collapsed. I heard another scream, and a dromedary roared, but mostly they spurted sand before us or sang over our heads.

One or two overexcited men popped several erratic shots into them as they rode—— for leather, but the others held their fire, rifle and machine-gun, until they were seemingly almost on top of us. Then Vèron opened the ball, and from the four sides came the rattle of the Maxim and crash of volleys.

Standing beside my machine section, with an eye on it in case she jammed, I thought for one moment that they would sweep right over us. They seemed as thick as bees.

Riders, with the long black locks sticking out above their veils, shot off their animals as they plunged, dropped, or swerved madly. The second and third volleys, even with the machine going for all she was worth, failed to bring 'em up. A bullet whined past my head as, drawing my revolver, I began emptying into the ruck of the glaring eyes and gleaming lances, not more than ten yards distant away. Their yells sounded above the clatter of the guns. Although in some confusion from maddened animals, they came right on right on top of us through a hell of lead. I heard Fieldmorre shouting:

"Bayonet! Bayonet!" echoed by Casey's bull voice on my left.

For several moments everything was just a general mix-up—shouts, yells, screams of animals amid the spluttering and rattling of the guns. A big bony devil, eyes glaring above his linen mask, appeared right on top of me as I was turning from another, slashed with his five-foot sword and missed.

I caught him by a bare ankle and heaved him off on to the bayonet of a big Hausa sergeant grinning like a fiend. Then, grabbing a handy bayonet, I waded in on my own, for these guys were own brothers to

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my Mahdi friends, and I had quite a few scores to pay off.

All the same I had to keep an eye on my own men. I stepped back a pace to see what they were up to—fighting like furies. Anyway the rush had been stopped and the square wasn't broken.

I guessed it was about time to charge and throw 'em off. I turned. Fieldmorre was standing on a bale of goods with his pipe in his mouth. I caught his eye and pantomimed drawing a sword to charge. He nodded, and, taking the pipe from his mouth, bawled orders generally.

But our offensive came almost too late, for after the failure of their first rush they tucked up and began scuttling for cover, so that the charge degenerated into a chase.

The only difficulty I had with my men was to get 'em back, for obviously if the Tuareg lured us far out of formation, rallied and charged again, they'd take us on the hip. However, they didn't, and amid much shouting and a few desultory shots they rode mighty hard to get out of rifle-range.

We had bagged quite a few wounded and killed. The trouble was what to do with the former. For information they were useless, for you could have cut 'em to pieces and never dug out a single word except hearty curses.

We had lost three killed and eleven wounded among the Hausa. Sarkard had gone—received a slug in the left temple; Barnard, Famitty and O'Donnell had sword and lance flesh-wounds.

We stuck to our camp for that day, but beyond racing about Arab fashion almost on the horizon, the Tuareg did not reattack. The most astonishing thing was the number of 'em—over a thousand at least, we estimated. And, as Vèron said, these nomads seldom travel in bunches of even a few hundred.

But all hands felt good that night. I did—although I was done in, for I hadn't yet got my strength back. The scrap had apparently healed all personal troubles. But the trials which the expedition was to suffer were merely beginning.

TO BE CONTINUED

A PIRATE BATTLE IN MASSACHUSETTS

by Lewis Appleton Barker

SO FAR as the records show, there has been but one battle between the authorities and pirates within the confines of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts—or rather, in the colony preceding the commonwealth—although there have been several trials and executions for piracy held there.

In the year 1689, the officers of the Crown became alarmed at the repeated depredations, committed upon New England coasts by two notorious sea-robbers, by name, Thomas Hawkins and Thomas Ponnd. Accordingly a sloop called the *Mary*, under command of Captain Samuel Pease, made sail on October 4th, for a spot known as Tarpaulin Cove, information having been received that the pirates were lurking thereabouts.

When off Wood's Hole, it was learned from a fisherman that the outlaws were not far away; so, clapping on all the sail he could carry, Captain Pease was in a few hours within hailing distance of his foe. Apparently the latter had had notice of the expedition, and when ordered to heave to, ran up a red flag, upon which the *Mary* fired a shot athwart his forefoot, with an order for him to strike his colors.

Nothing, however, was further from the pirate's intention. As the sloop bore down on him, sending another shot under his forefoot, with a second command to strike, Ponnd appeared upon his quarter-deck, and brandishing his sword, cried out to them—

"Come on, you dogs, and I will strike you."

His crew seemed imbued with the same spirit, and a volley was poured in upon the *Mary*, which promptly returned it.

A sharp engagement ensued, in which several were wounded on both sides, although none were killed. At length, Captain Pease had recourse to boarding, and after a severe hand-to-hand encounter, succeeded in overpowering the outlaws, who were brought back in triumph to Boston, where, unfortunately, the hero of the enterprise, Captain Pease, succumbed to his wounds, and died five days thereafter.

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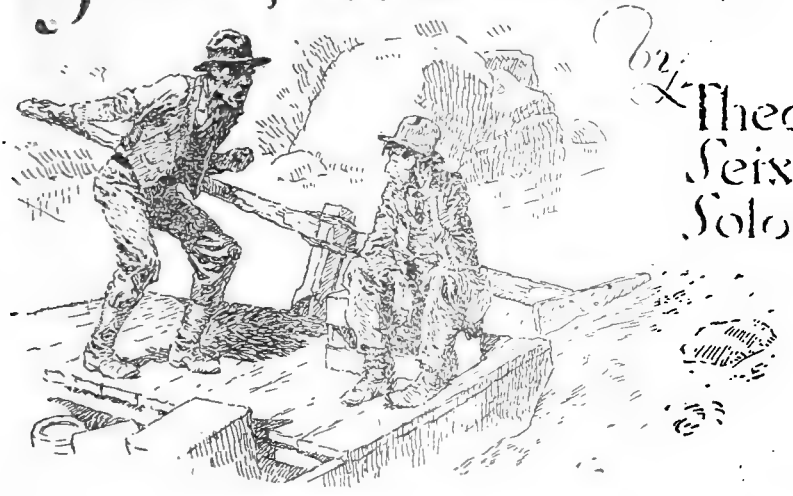
Jeff, the "Guesser"*



By Theodore Seixas Solomons

Author of "In the Maw of the Ice," "The Spine of the Monster," etc.

IT WAS in June of the big year of the Klondike rush. We had just shot the Miles Cañon and White Horse Rapids. At the foot of the plunge from The Spine of the Monster—as we called these living perils—on the shore of a beautiful green pool our lithe Canadian pilot shouldered his fee, a sack of corn-meal, and paused to give us a last word of advice.

"You're all right, now, except the Thirty-Mile River. That's where some swift-water men ought to be, for it's the worst bit of the Yukon clear down to the Klondike. You'll find it'll come in handy, down there, to do a little husky pulling for steerage way."

As he said this, his eye rested significantly on our fourth man, Jeff.

We called him just "Jeff." We had failed to inquire his other name—at first from mere indifference to the parents that bore him, and later from aversion to them. But later still—well, nothing mattered then!

To understand about Jeff and the Thirty-Mile it is necessary to go back to the start of our memorable voyage down the Yukon after the ice went out of the lakes. A few days before, an early boatman from upper Lake Bennett had dumped him and his ragged blankets into the little cove where Howard, Bodkins, and I had built our boat. On his person were visible, besides his tattered shoes and still more tattered Derby hat, a frayed and dirty sateen shirt, a hand-me-down suit, and—fancy it!—an old necktie. Aside from any underclothing he may have been wearing, the foregoing is a complete inventory of his possessions.

The young gentleman himself—at least he seemed to have been designed as a gentleman—was somewhere between fifteen and thirty, slender, sanguine, open as the day, devil-may-care, and full of camaraderie. It is only a detail, but—his face needed washing.

Jeff's proposition was rather ingenuous.

"Boys," he had said, when the scow was champing its bit, impatient to begin its six hundred-mile inland voyage, "I'm light m'se'f, and I'm a-trabellin' light. I don't eat a —— of a whole lot, and I might be handy in a pinch. Co'se I don't *sabe* them floatin' things. Land's m' specialty. It don't teeter s' much. But anything I *kin* do—you won't owe me nothin' for it; and I reckon when you-all lands me in Do'son City, Ah'll be fixed!"

We didn't think much of the cuss—but

* *This is an Off-the-Trail Story. See first contents page.*

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we liked him. That only sounds inconsistent! Anyhow we let him come along. So he was with us when we rowed out into Lake Bennett.

We felt that what we needed most was sea-room, and plenty of it! So we secured all there was by rowing into the exact middle of the lake. Then the job of splitting that lake lengthwise to its narrow outlet stared us in the face, and we took stock of what marine knowledge we had, pooled it, and made Bodkins treasurer of the fund.

Bodkins, in his youth, had once caught catfish in a slough from what he called the hurricane deck of a six-foot skiff. And as neither Howard nor myself had had anything like so complete a nautical experience, and Jeff, by his own admission, had had none whatever, it was logical that Bodkins should be given command. It was therefore "Captain" Bodkins who now ordered us, in a deep voice, to "heave up the main sheet home."

The main—and only—sheet was a big, oblong tarpaulin stretched between poles, which Jeff said he had heard were called yardsticks. We had made this sail, just as we had made the scow, by simply copying from our neighbors in the next cove, who had assured us that the winds of heaven would show us how it worked. They did. One or more of them came along and punched the sail in the stomach; and we found ourselves moving through the water.

To comprehend what we were subsequently up against in swift water, it is only necessary to consider the lines of our craft. It was the shape of the sail, which was the shape of a school slate, only a little narrower, of course. The bow and stern were exact mates and consisted of the two ends the bottoms of which sloped up from the rest of the bottom. That will doubtless be perfectly clear to marine architects.

Howard insisted that each of these ends were both a bow and a stern as much as the other was either. And on the strength of this, when the thing got turned around once, Bodkins, who was steering, said—

"Oh, what's the odds!"

And he merely took his steering-oar over to the other end. First he grew red in the face, then purple, and finally black, trying to keep the scow on its course.

We finally decided that the difficulty lay in the fact the mast and sail were now nearer the back end than the front end of the structure. So the end of the scow farthest from the mast we kept as the hind end, and called it the stern. And we kept the other end—which had to be called the bow—headed in the general direction of Dawson. It was easy.

The art of navigation had nothing on us until we got to the mouth of the lake and were about to enter Caribou Crossing, a short piece of river connecting Lake Bennett with Lake Tagish. It looked like the

small—the very small—neck of a funnel; and we didn't know whether Bodkins would be marksman enough to hit it. Our fears were groundless. As the lake narrowed to the river funnel it developed a surprizing current which swept us through.

But if our fears were groundless, the scow proved quite otherwise as soon as we hit Tagish Lake. The current flung us on a mud flat, and the scow became exceedingly well grounded!

"All hands jump overboard and push!" bawled Captain Bodkins. "Or, at least," he amended, in a more conversational tone, "all feet jump overboard and all hands push."

At once we dug into the dunnage bags for our rubber boots—all but poor Jeff who, of course, had none.

"You hain't got a extra pair, have you, gents?" he asked anxiously.

No, we hadn't. But we took the will for the deed. He seemed so ready to help! We pushed the old scow—and Jeff—off the mud, jumped in again—and then our real troubles commenced!

We found that Lake Tagish was shaped something like a starfish that had eaten green apples and been petrified during the ensuing crisis. One of its colicky rays is Windy Arm. When we reached the near

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side of it, we waited for the wind to die, but the patient showed remarkable vitality.

We ate several meals on that shore, and watched the boats and barges come in and tackle the Arm. They all felt its biceps. Some got over, some came back, and some went hurtling sidewise out into the lake. A craft like ours needed either skilful handling or a dead calm. I asked a grizzled veteran when he thought the wind would die down, to which he replied:

"Die down! You mean rare up! This is the quietest it's been for at least a month. If you cal-kerlate to stay here till that there breeze dies down you'll have old Methusalem looking like he wore short pants. This is the Windy Arm. The wind was made first and th' arm was fitted in around it!"

So we went to it. We drifted out and were caught by that primeval breeze. Instantly we were in a choppy sea, and the old Clydesdale of a scow became a frisky filly. Things slipped and slopped about; Howard and I promoted ourselves to the rank of advisory captains, and even Jeff asked if there was anything he could do. We gave him the extra oar.

He put it between the pins, pushed it out a foot or two, and then ran back and forth with the handle, stepping on my feet and Howard's. We howled to him—with real howls—to shove his oar farther out and sit down. Whereupon he pushed it far out, leaving only a few inches of it inboard. Naturally, the lake began to wrench the oar away from him.

"It's going; it's going!" he yelped.

And it went! He seemed so cut up about it that we hastened to assure him that we could make another at our next camp. But that did not seem to comfort him a bit!

It was a queer thing that although we kept the scow's nose pointing up the arm, as we had been told to do, we drifted out into the lake just the same—nose, direction and all! Wiser scow-drivers told us afterward that we probably lacked keel, should have had a lee-board, and might have close-hauled our yardsticks, or words to that effect. But, better still, they said, would have been a large tug-boat related to us by a three-inch hawser.

They assured us, however, that we had been in no danger. What the grand fleet had been trying to sidestep was merely the necessity of working back to the proper side of the lake by a process unpopularly known as "hand-tacking," which was an amusement yielding a rich harvest of callouses. We verified that!

OUR nautical education proceeded by leaps and bounds on Lake Tagish. We explored every contorted ray of the starfish. There was always enough wind coming out of one of them to blow us into another, and enough coming out of that to blow us into a third.

At last a good-hearted zephyr sneaked up to us, and, looking cautiously around to see that no other breeze was observing it, broke every rule of the lake by blowing us in the right direction. Jeff said he had thrown a rabbit's foot overboard that morning. We soon caught up with the great fleet that lay becalmed in Marsh Lake, now a broad expanse of glass—it seemed.

"If I could on'y see a 'gator," remarked Jeff, "I'd think m'se'f in a big Mi'ss'ippi b'you!"

We pulled into the bank for the luxury of camping ashore, and for most of the forty hours we spent on that pleasant lake margin waiting for a wind, Jeff lay upon his many blankets in the stern of the scow, his knees cocked up, smoking, or crooning negro lullabys to woo the fickle Goddess of Slumber.

As we approached the cañon and rapids, the absolute helplessness of the happy-go-lucky devil as a scow-hand worried us considerably. Every day for a week we coaxed him to take a shift at the steering-oar—to our invariable regret.

To Jeff, a sand-bar, the bank, a half-submerged tree or another boat, denizened by mocking spirits—all these were so many lodestones that drew him irresistibly. He tried. Heavens, *how* he tried! But he simply didn't have the head for it, and we gave him up.

"It's funny, too," said Howard to Bodkins and me, "when you consider that his life has been spent around the big rivers of the South. I suppose it's just a kind of natural hydrophobia!"

The skeptical eye the pilot turned on Jeff was proof enough that, in spite of the Canadian's preoccupation with his ticklish job of guiding us through the rapids, he had noticed the hobo's inaptitude with the oar. The rest of us thought he had done rather well—for Jeff!

Now, a few hours' run brought us out upon Lake LeBarge, that spacious and most

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beautiful of all the Yukon lakes. Delightedly we sailed its length, and camped in the evening at the head of Thirty-Mile River. After supper, in conversation with our nearest neighbors, who had been argonauts for years on the mighty Alaskan waterway, we amply verified the assertion of the pilot.

It was strange that every account we had read of the trip down the Yukon had made much of Tagish with its winds, of Marsh with its sand-bars, the cañon with its current, and the White Horse, with its rough water. But little or nothing was said of the Thirty-Mile River, with its snake-like course, its swiftness and its half-submerged rocks and reefs. We slept but little that night—all but Jeff—and made an early start.

Now that kind of river, to a landsman whose life depends upon safely navigating it down-stream—and the Thirty-Mile was strewn with wrecks!—is something like a big book on a new subject printed in small type in a foreign language, which must be translated and mastered—and acted upon—as fast as the eye can scan its pages. A ticker-tape—with the wind blowing it all over the room—might be an apter simile. He who runs simply must read!

The text? Playing lightly on the water's surface are many little shimmers, ripples, swirls, cork-screwing dimples—meaningless things seemingly. Yet they are the infallible signs of the currents, cross-currents, channels, deeps and shallows, of the hidden perils of snags and "sweepers" and fang-like rocks. They were all there in the Thirty-Mile—the foreign words in very small type! And they were not for us!

Ten minutes after we left Lake LeBarge we badly wanted our Canadian pilot. We would have been willing to heap in his lap all our own corn-meal and—if we had possessed it—all the corn-meal in both Kansas and Nebraska. This generous feeling began when the scow began to lope.

"We're going pretty fast, boys," observed Bodkins. "Don't you think you'd better gimme a little headway so I can steer when the rocks and reefs show up?"

It was one of the things we had learned of navigation, that to steer you must be under headway. If your sail is up and doing, the wind gives it to you. If it is not, you have to row. We had now a strong incentive to row. We remembered the advice of our dear, departed pilot.

At once, then, Bodkins and I buckled into our oars. Jeff we held in reserve! He lounged near the stern. He had heard the accounts of this section of river given us by the argonauts, and I hoped he would take some interest in the proceedings.

He did! A grating sound was heard as we scraped a submerged rock—I guess it was. And I guess he guessed it was, too—or "reckoned"—for he noticeably winced. Bodkins turned pale.

"Say," the latter called out, "how'm I gonna steer away from what I can't see?"

"Well, *we've* got our backs to it," replied Howard. "It's a cinch we can't see it!"

"I seen it," says Jeff. "That is, I reckon I done seen it—if it was that funny li'l' curly look on the water."

"Well, keep a-looking for 'em, my lad," invited Bodkins cordially. "Maybe we can get some use out of your eyes anyhow."

The sarcasm of this was probably lost on Jeff. Nevertheless he took the suggestion. He sat on a box and surveyed the river ahead. In a minute or two we passed a rock.

"Would anything happen if we swatted one?" he asked naively.

The three of us groaned in chorus, and the poor rube rolled a cigaret. A moment later I caught an anxious look in Bodkins' face.

"There's a big round one right in the middle, down there!" he warned. "Better pull a little stronger, boys."

The current had been running along the right bank, so quite naturally he steered that way. But the current seemed to have contracted the habit of crossing the river at frequent intervals. It never seemed satisfied with either side for very long. And it must have been crossing then, and drawing us toward the left bank.

"We don't seem to be making it. Pull harder, boys," cried Bodkins.

We bent to the oars with a vim. Had I been a little stronger, I have no doubt we would have split the old scow on that rock, for of course we were working at cross-purposes with the current! I caught the cold shade of the rock in the tail of my eye as we swirled safely past it.

"A close call, gen'lemun!" said Jeff.

Heaven be praised, his face was sickly! Scared as I was myself, I was conscious of a thrill of satisfaction in the spectacle. Even *his* colossal ignorance was ceasing to be bliss to him!

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"We musn't leave that happen a'gin, boys," he avowed with great earnestness.

"How you gonna help it?" rasped Bodkins at him. "The infernal, dod-gasted current don't know its own mind!"

"Don't you reckon, mebbe, it'll take us by itse'f, with a li'le he'p from the oa's—'stead o' buckin' it thataway?" suggested Jeff, dropping deeper into the soft, slurring accents of his Southland.

"Well, dew tell!" piped Howard, derisively. "The boy's waking up at last!"

"All right, Jeff. Then how about this one?" Bodkins jerked out at him. "We're going on it straight, 'spite of all the steering this side of ——!"

The fool was back again in his paradise apparently. He lit his cigaret and drawled:

"Why, ain't the current crossin' a'gin? 'Pears like it would carry us by. 'C'ose, it all looks funny to me," he tapered off diffidently.

Bodkins continued a full minute, braced up against his steering-oar, his eyes glued on some fearful vision, sweat exuding from every pore. Then his face relaxed.

"You can rest up a bit, boys," he announced with cheerful smirk. "We'll miss it a mile!"

There were perhaps fifteen minutes more of this killing strain before the big thing happened—fifteen minutes that were like fifteen years. Black, jagged teeth thrust out their sharp cusps at us in every bend. The current, crossing and recrossing, flung us among and between them, this way and that. Jeff kept looking at the river, and Captain Bodkins seemed to follow his look.

"Jeff, Jeff, what do you make of that?" he suddenly exclaimed.

A sharp curve had disclosed a hungry group of devils, their fangs ranged fanwise toward us. Without waiting for a reply—

"Pull, pull for your lives, boys!" he shouted.

"No!" shrieked Jeff. "You'll pull us right smack into 'em. We're just right as we are!"

It seemed sure wreck to cease rowing, yet by some instinct cease we did! We even pulled in our oars—which was lucky, for Howard's blade would have jammed the bank and mine been splintered by the reef as we floated grandly by.

A respite followed—a long stretch of clear, straight river. Bodkins drew in his steering-oar and thoughtfully mopped his brow. Then he came over to the slim young hobo, his features working.

"Say, Jeff!"

Jeff looked up in innocence.

"You're a good guesser, Jeff, ain't you?"

"I always b'en lucky," agreed Jeff in a gentle voice.

"Never so lucky as now," returned Bodkins. "For if we weren't where we are I'd brain you!"

"For bein' a good guesser?" shrilled Jeff, a look of incredible injury on his dirty face.

Bodkins doubled his fists—all but one forefinger, with which he viciously stabbed the air in the vicinity of Jeff's snub nose.

"You guess some more! And right out loud!" he growled, and returned to the steering-oar.

Jeff kind of hunched himself up on his box. His eyes sought the planks. He seemed to be trying hard to swallow his tongue. But at the next bend of the river he arose and edged over toward Bodkins and "guessed some more"!

His method of conjecturing seemed to be to glance carelessly at the river and say something to Bodkins in a scared voice. But it was when he looked at Bodkins that he was scared—not when he looked at the river! For the river seemed to hold no terrors for Jeff, so long as Bodkins acted on his "guesses"—which Bodkins did with a fervid promptitude! And no rock seemed able to tag us or reef to lay us by the heels.

By this time I was near to fainting from the strain of the oar, and when the river cleared again I made no bones of it. Our captain looked at Jeff, the solemn-faced, and grinned. Then he said:

"I'll take your oar. It'll rest me, too, after handling this sweep so long. I'll just turn the scow over to you, Jeff!"

"You're elected, Jeff," echoed Howard.

Jeff looked at the big, heavy, clumsy stern sweep and groaned. Out loud, without shame, like a poisoned cow, he groaned.

"I couldn't!" he protested, weakly. "I ain't got the heft!"

"You haven't, hey!" roared Bodkins.

He picked up a mattock handle. It was new, and of second-growth hickory. He rolled up his sleeve, spat on his hand, and took a firm grip on the club.

"You get holt of that oar, or by the Jumping Judas Priest I'll smash your skull!"

For a moment Jeff stood irresolute, a big tear gathered in each eye. His stupendous

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laziness and his love of life seemed wrestling with each other. But as usual self-preservation maintained its honored place as Nature's first law. It won out by perhaps the thickness of a blond hair. Jeff moved painfully to the sweep and backed it out into the water.

"Captain Jeff!" whooped Bodkins.

And we all touched our caps.

'Way down, Jeff was a sport. Slowly the sun broke through the wo-clouds of his grimy face. He grinned sheepishly as he said:

"Well, boys, gib us a li'l' pull. Down yonder's a spike o' rock 'bout two foot under the water. I'd dearly love to miss it!"

And thus he guided our clumsy craft through the racing, raging waters of the lower Thirty-Mile—the most dangerous half of it, as we learned subsequently—weaving among its cruel snags and treacherous reefs with what to us was an uncanny skill. And he did it to the lilting of light-hearted negro melodies!

THAT night Jeff preserved a discreet silence during our evening meal, his eyes cast modestly down. We had been careful to camp far from neighbors, for we loathed the idea of being deserted by our new and precious navigator. Bodkins sopped up the last of his dried-apple sauce and thus addressed the hero—

"Jeff, you perjured water rat, you swore that land was your specialty, didn't you?"

Jeff was silent.

"I call to mind a long string of places on this trip where you could have saved us time and muscle and sweat by occasionally volunteering what you shyly call your "guesses." But no. You let us go aground, when all you need have done was look through the water with those fourth-dimension eyes of yours and warn us away!

"You let us jump into that icy lake and wear our hearts out hauling and shoving and pushing on this ten-ton scow! You let us blow and drift around Lake Tagish! You deliberately fouled your oar and lost it. You made us work like galley-slaves, so that at night we were too fagged out to eat, while you fed your breeze-sharpened appetite on corn-bread and blackstrap enough to fatten a band of Berkshire hogs. You cold-hearted little snake—why did you do it?"

Jeff gazed down the bank dejectedly.

"I suppose one of the luckiest things that ever happened to you in all your lucky career, Captain Jeff," contributed Howard, "is the fact that we've still got the Five Finger and the Rink Rapids to shoot. That's your luck, because if we should cut your throat from ear to ear, or tie you back in the timber there, tonight, where the wolves howl, slavering their chops for a taste of nice tender muscles like yours, we'd simply be losing the services of a young hound who is, beyond question, one of the most expert swift-water runners in North America. Hence your life is safe—for the present!"

"And at the White Horse," resumed Bodkins, glowering at the melancholy youth, "it comes back to me that you were mightily interested in what those pilots were getting for steering boats through. I wonder you didn't desert then, you poisonous muskrat, you!"

Jeff saw the opening.

"I didn't like to leave you fellers after you'd be'n so good to me. I reckoned mebbe I *might* be a he'p befo' long, in case——"

"You little lying skunk!" interrupted Howard promptly. "I saw you blench when the pilot told you how hard the work was."

"And did you notice," reminded Bodkins, "how close he let us shave those rocks this morning before he began his 'guessing'?"

He turned on Jeff again.

"You filthy little horned toad! Come out of your glum fit and tell us the why of all this, right now, or you'll take us through the Five Finger Rapids on an empty stomach!"

This direful threat broke down Jeff's reticence.

"Oh, boys," he begged huskily—and if I ever heard sincerity, I heard it then. "My heart ain't so hard. It done beat with pity fo' you-all many's the time. It was jes' I was frightened plum' to death."

He raised his hand as if to shut out a hideous specter.

"I was scairt if I oncet let on, you'd sho' put me to work!"

He may have flushed—it was so hard to tell—as he added—

"It's be'n said I was bo'n fatigued!"

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The man who couldn't miss

by H. H. Birney Jr.

THE old-timers unite in declaring fervently and often profanely that Santone is not the town she used to be. Trolley-cars rattle and clang up and down Commerce and Houston Streets, curio stores line the historic Alamo Plaza, catering to the desires of those whose tastes run to stuffed horned toads, armadillo baskets, and "Germantown" Navajo blankets. Airplanes drone overhead from the big school at Kelly Field, and cadets sketch with inexpert fingers the course of the Salado as it appears from the basket of a captive-balloon. Prohibition has brought an unaccustomed and undesired drought to the leathery throats of the old "longhorns" who sip lemonade and similar cooling but innocuous beverages in the vine-clad patio of the Menger or on the deep porches of the Alamo Club.

The Santone of today had turned out to pay posthumous homage to the local hero. There was an element of pathetic irony in the fact that the Sammy Felton who used to hang around the pool-room on Military Plaza and do odd jobs for folks along Main Avenue could not be present to enjoy and glory in the impressive funeral services held in honor of Private Samuel R. Felton, D. S. C., Croix de Guerre, Co. B, Three Hundred and Ninety-Blankth Infantry, A. E. F.

Sammy had held what he would call a pretty fair job when General Crowder started sending around personal invitations for a tour of France; no guarantee on return tickets. Sammy had put up quite an argument to the local authorities who served him with a notice to report and then read him a homily from the text, "*dulce et decorum est.*" He would have much preferred working for his country to dying for it. But he went—as did quite a few others—and in October, 1918, calmly proceeded to capture a machine-gun nest single-handed, bayoneting its crew, seizing the gun, reversing it, and holding up a Boche counter-attack while a frantic captain and three lieutenants struggled to reorganize a badly scattered and worried company.

They sent Sammy to the rear with a half-dozen machine-gun bullets through his body and he eventually died of wounds in a base-hospital. And today they had buried Sammy—his third interment, by the way—in St. Paul's Cemetery—with the flag on his coffin, firing-squad from Camp Travis and a bugler to blow "taps" over the mound. Half the town had turned out, and a popular subscription had erected a monument extolling thereon the greater love which prompted a man to lay down his life for his friends.

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And in the evening the Santone of the past—what was left of it—gathered as usual to dream and smoke and yarn in the northwest corner of the Alamo Club, the corner sacred to the old-timers by virtue of long-established customs; old Judge Westcott, who had been one of the first to bring the law into the cow-country, Cap'n Jim Salesby who, at the head of a company of rangers, had enforced that law with a smoking .45, Ben Davis, who had punched other men's cows from California to the Mississippi and later had ranged his own herds over the Lone Star State—these and other old originals tipped back in the leather chairs with their well-worn pipes and disappointing drinks.

The judge was speaking. He had attended the services at the cemetery, partly from civic pride and partly from that interest in the grave that grows more keen as we ourselves approach it.

"So little Sammy Felton has come back to Santone and been buried as a hero. Ain't it funny how we never can tell what's in any human bein' until they really get up against it and face a genuine show-down. Here's Sammy—nobody thought anything of him when he used to hang around town, an' he goes to war and dies a hero, killin' until he was killed himself. The only gunnin' Sammy ever did in his life was after doves out along the Frio Road, and they come an' stick him in a uniform an' in less'n a year make a man-hunter out of him. It's darn hard to savvy. Now if it was you, Jim, or a fellow like Enright, I could see how it all worked out; but Sammy——"

Cap'n Jim rubbed his thumb thoughtfully along the bowl of his pipe.

"Oh, I dunno, Dave," he remarked. "Settin' here and listenin' to you talk thataway about Sammy kinda makes me think of Bill Trevor—the two cases was so alike an' yet so blamed different."

The judge's leathery countenance cracked in a reminiscent smile.

"Bill Trevor," said he, "Bill Trevor. Lord, Jim, I haven't thought of that *hombre* in ten years. Bill Trevor, Pinacate Bill. I guess you and I are the only men left now who remember him and how he wound up. Tell these boys 'bout Bill, why don't yu, Jim."

The old ranger squirmed in his chair and sucked energetically on his pipe.

"——, Dave, you knew him better than ever I did—and Lord He knows you're a better hand at a tale than I'll ever be. Tell it yourself."

WESTCOTT tamped a fresh load into his pipe.

"Mebbe I do know more about Bill, 'cause I knew Zeke Trevor, Bill's daddy, and from knowin' Zeke I learned how Bill really got his start as a bad-man and just how he come to get his name as the man who couldn't miss.

"Zeke Trevor was one of the real old long-hairs. He'd been with Pickett and was wounded at Gettysburg and then he'd drifted West, finally fetching up in the Chiricahuas in '69. He found a little free gold and pecked around the hills, beside runnin' a two-by-twice farm to get enough green stuff to feed his wife and kid. Them mountains are popular with 'lungers' now, but when Zeke landed there a man sure had to be all man if he wanted to stay there and keep his hair. Old Hu and Sathanas and Conchise and the rest of the Apache raiders were rampin' around high, wide an' handsome; liftin' hair an' hosses whenever and wherever they got the chance.

"Zeke's little claim an' truck-patch was a mite off the road the reds usually traveled and by luck or reason of more profitable business he was let pretty much alone. Finally, however, some wanderin' band spotted him, and havin' nothin' better to do started in to collect Zeke an' his family as souvenirs.

"Nobody saw that scrap an' Zeke never would talk much about it, but she must have been a honey. Their cabin was built against the sheer wall of a cañon, steeper than straight up an' down, so they were safe from the rear. Old Zeke had his sixes and two .45-90 Sharps, the old buffler-guns. He was a good shot, was Zeke, an' his wife could handle a gun too. Women had to in Arizona in them days. Young Bill was just a nine-year-old so they stuck him down in the root-cellar that was under the cabin.

"An Indian in a dirty white shirt makes a pretty fair mark against red sandstone, and jest as soon as Zeke saw they meant business and not sociability he started in stoppin' 'em. Luckily for Zeke the baile began in the forenoon so he had some hours of daylight before he'd have to face a rush in the dark.

"Arizona saw a plenty of fights like that in the old days. The Apaches would skulk

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around in the rocks, squirmin' from cover to cover an' throwin' a slug towards the cabin whenever they thought they had half a chance. Zeke just had to lay quiet, savin' his sixes in case of a rush, an' takin' snap-shots with the old Sharps whenever a patch of white shirt or a puff of smoke showed where a red lay quiled up in the rocks like a blue racer in a pa'tridge-nest. It's a good thing for whites that Injuns are lackin' any sense of why hind-sights are put on guns or Arizona never would have been settled.

" 'Long about noon Zeke got a slug through his left shoulder, smashin' the bone; but Mrs. Zeke bound it up for him and he went right ahead with his business. Then a little later he hears Mrs. Zeke give a half groan and he finds a red had drilled her through the body. She had time only to whisper good-by to Zeke and tell him to look after little Bill and she was gone. Zeke never talked of that part of the fight, but it must have steeled his arm an' taught him cunning, for he held his fire until the Apaches got a little careless and then accounted for two more of them, clean kills both times.

"Then he notices a little patch of somethin' showin' between two rocks well back of the line of fight. He notches up the old Sharps and heaves a slug down there. There was a wild yell and a buck jumps straight up in the air, landin' all spraddled out as dead as a mackerel. Zeke must have showed himself a little, 'cause first thing he knew the rifle was knocked from his grip and he felt a searing pain run up his arm. An Injun bullet had tore the thumb and forefinger off his right hand.

"Zeke was a wise *hombre* and had savvy enough not to let 'em know he was hit, but grabbed the other rifle and started slingin' lead as fast as he could load and fire with only three fingers to do it with. Then he finds some rags and ties up his hand. But the fight was pretty well out of the Injuns. That last buck he downed must have been the boss of the bunch, and without a leader the others lost heart. Anyway, he could hear 'em talkin' and presently they slowly drifted away.

"You can bet that when Zeke found they were gone he didn't waste much time gettin' out of there himself. He kept his ponies a little farther up the cañon, and somehow or other with young Bill's help he got two of 'em saddled up and heads for Tres Palomas. Remember he had one shoulder smashed an' the other hand ruined, so you'll see what it was for him to face a sixty-mile ride with only a child to help him. He had to leave his wife there, and I reckon that's what did more than anything else to sour him, 'cause when we rode down we found that the Apaches had looted the house and mutilated and burned the dead woman.

"I was just a youngster then, but I knew Zeke pretty well and I'll never forget his comin' into town, with young Bill just about able to stick on his pony, and the dust of sixty miles of alkali not enough to hide the pain on Zeke's face. We got him to bed with his wounds washed and dressed, and nursed him as well as we could.

"It was a hard fight an' if Zeke hadn't been as tough as whang leather he wouldn't have made it, but finally he began to get around again. He'd be a cripple the rest of his life and he knew it. The ball that went through his shoulder had smashed the bone pretty badly so it healed stiff and the thumb and first finger were clear gone from his right hand.

"He was a changed man—particularly so when he realized that he'd never pull gun again and that personally he'd never be able to square the debt he owed the Apaches.

" 'But I've got little Bill, Dave,' he told me one day, 'an' I'll sure teach him how to settle for me.'

"An' that's just what he started out to do. Day after day he had that kid out in the hills, making him practise the draw, tossin' rocks in the air for him, so's he could figger their speed and how to hold to hit 'em, makin' him estimate ranges and then pace 'em off to check his guess, teachin' him how to shoot from the hip and how not to do it, which is more important. Then he'd take him in hand with a rifle and go through the same sort of business. As I said, Zeke was a good shot, and he knew something of the science of shooting—the whys and wherefores; ballistics they call it now, but we'd never heard that word in Arizona then. Lawdy, he'd keep that kid practisin' just openin' and closin' his fist, clenchin' it hard each time, for hours on end. And in between sessions with the guns old Zeke would preach his gospel to him—the undying hate of anything and everything Apache.

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"I DRIFTED north for a while about that time—had a fool idea that I'd like to take a whirl at the mining-game and looked around Colorado a spell. From there I went back East for a visit, and take it altogether it was a matter of eight or nine years before I was back in the Chiricahua country. Meetin' old friends and talkin' over all the old times I come to mention the Trevors. I remember it was Tom Kennedy I was talkin' to. 'Great grief, Dave,' says he, 'now I do know you've been away from here. That old long-hair and that kid of his are still livin' here. The old man's getting kinda feeble, but he sure keeps ridin' that boy. Has him out in the hills huntin' 'Paches all the time. You know the Government has put a bounty of fifty dollars on 'Pache skelps. Well, that boy's just naturally shootin' hisself rich. Some of us don't like it any too well. It looks as if he's gettin' almost too many. Greasers have nice straight black hair, you know. But nobody's goin' to say anything where it might get back to Bill. Shoot—Lord Harry, how that kid can handle a gun! I've seen good ones, good as they come, but that eighteen-year-old boy's so far ahead of 'em all there's no comparin' 'em. He just begins where the rest leave off.'

"Me, I was sort of interested to see 'em after all that, so I pilgrims out to their shack. Zeke was a lot older, that showed mighty plain. Sort of slowin' up all over. But his eye was as bright as ever an' it shone like a diamond whenever he talked of Bill and when he showed me the line of notches cut in the door-jamb—one notch for each 'Pache. I counted forty-six of 'em, and it sort of sickened me, though I had no love for any Injuns. I knew the kind of fightin' it stood for; bush-rangin,' stealthy crawlin' through brush and over lava dikes until he could ambush his game—then a quick getaway. While I was lookin' at 'em I heard a horse comin' around the house and old Zeke's eyes lit up. It was Bill, and just to meet him strengthened the feelin' I had when lookin' at the notches. He was only eighteen or nineteen then, but looked six years older; not a bad-lookin' lad, but too quiet, too self-possessed, and too cat-like in his smooth, quick motions. He wore two forty-fives, tied low on his thighs, and he had a habit, not nervous but kind of instinctive, of lettin' his hands drop to the big square butts and then flash up again.

"He spoke to me civilly enough, and remembered me. His voice was very even, plumb monotonous in fact. He never seemed interested in anything except his guns and the mission that old Zeke had laid out for him. He was just a machine, not a human kid at all. Frankly, I didn't cotton to him and it wasn't long before I drifted back to town.

"Some weeks later I ran across him again in the hills, just run across him by accident one time when I'd rode out to knock over something for supper. I come out of a little patch of piñon on the edge of a box-cañon and discovered Bill at his exercises. He'd take a small rock and roll it down the slope ahead of him. Then his hand would flash to his hip and out would come his gun, leapin' into flame almost before it cleared the scabbard, and the rock would fly to pieces. First with one hand, then with the other, he smashed rock after rock. Something told me he wouldn't admire bein' watched so I took my horse back fifty yards in the timber and then crawled up again to watch the shootin'.

"Regularly every four shots he would stop and reload each gun, and I had to grin at the way he stuck to a regular bad-man trick even in his practise. 'Never be caught with an empty gun' must have been one of old Zeke's Ten Commandments. While I watched, a couple of pack-rats, scared either by a ball or a chunk of rock strikin' near them, jumped out of the crack where they'd been hidin' and scurried across an open space.

"Bill was stoopin', pickin' out another rock for a target. From the tail of his eye he caught the motion as the rats hustled for cover. Instantly he wheeled, both guns leapin' into action as he turned. So close together that it sounded like a single report he cut loose, right and left. And each bullet rubbed out a rat. A slow smile, a smile without any humor in it, crept over his face, vanishin' almost immediately.

"Then I got my horse and rode back to town feelin' kinda solemn. I couldn't help thinkin' what a power for evil that young rip might become. He was a shootin'-machine, pure and simple. And I knew now that the talk I'd heard up and down the street was not idle gossip. He couldn't miss. Old Zeke hadn't taught him what

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to do in case he missed. He'd taught him only to hit, to hit every time; and the years of constant practise had resulted in an accuracy that wasn't human.

"It was about a month after that Zeke Trevor died. Some folks said his thirst for revenge on the Apaches had burned him up. Bill followed the rough coffin to the graveyard and stood a few moments gazin' into the hole as we filled it. His face was quiet as ever and for a second I felt sorry for him and almost liked him. Then his hands fluttered down towards his big guns—yes, he'd worn 'em to the grave—and I saw the shootin' machine where I thought I was lookin' at a grief-stricken son. Zeke Trevor had builded too well. The boy could never escape from his own skill.

"Bill closed up the cabin after his father's death and moved into town. He made no friends, he wasn't the kind to, but he seemed to take a sort of pleasure in just bein' around folks. Evenings he used to hang around the El Moro Saloon, takin' a drink once in a great while or maybe strollin' over and chancin' a dollar or two on the wheel, but most of the time just idlin' around watchin' the crowd. I was afraid that sooner or later his skill with a six-gun would result in trouble, and I wasn't wrong.

"But neither I nor any other man in town could blame Bill for his part in his first killin'. It was absolutely forced on him, and he had to shoot or be shown up as havin' a yellow streak. This night some jasper had rode in from up towards Agua Dulce, got full to the chin with liquor and just naturally begins lookin' for a fight. He'd heard of Bill and started pickin' on him, callin' him 'Injun-killer,' 'skelp-hunter' and such names. Bill sees he was drunk and kept his temper and cooler hands in the crowd hustled the fellow away. But in an hour or so he was back, sobered up some but uglier.

"Bill was standin' at the end of the bar. 'Get out of the way, boy, and let a man drink,' says the Agua Dulce party, and he gives Bill a shove to one side. As he did so he drops his hand on his gun. Both of Bill's hands were restin' on the bar, but he drops 'em, drew, and kills that *hombre* before the poor fool could even get his gun loose.

"The same mirthless smile that I had seen before passed over his face. 'You'll witness, gentlemen,' says he, 'that it was an even break,' and he walks out. Well, it was an even break accordin' to all the rules of gun-fightin' but Bill Trevor was a case for a suspension of the rules. It would have taken chain lightnin' to shoot it out with him on even terms.

"A coulple of months later I came to Texas, settlin' first in Fort Worth, where I lived a year or two. From time to time I ran across old friends and got news of Bill. I learned of the run-in he'd had near Fort Huachuca, when he'd been picked on by a couple of soldiers and had shot them both. The Federal authorities had him held for murder, but all witnesses agreed that he had given no offense and nothing could be done. They didn't try men in Arizona in 1881 when there was an even break. Then he downed another soldier who had sworn to get him for the first killin'. This got Uncle Sam pretty hot and Bill headed south, driftin' around in the Pinacate country below Tucson.

"He was gamblin' more now and had another scrap over a wheel which he claimed was crooked. Bill kicked the wheel over, exposin' a brake. The gambler flashed a derringer but while it was in the air Bill killed him and walked out—an even break again, you see. It was down there that he got the name of Pinacate Bill that stuck to him until the end.

"From Fort Worth I went south, was right here in San 'Tonio for a spell, and then got down to Marfa in the Big Bend. I represented the law and Jim here took care of the order part of it. He had come to Texas from Arizona and brought me considerable news of Bill. Seems like I was right and that lust for killin' that grows on gunmen had got complete control of him. He'd killed several Mexicans on mighty slim pretexts and a deputy-marshal whose only error was that he'd reached too hurriedly for some eatin' tobacco.

"That last had compelled Bill to keep mighty scarce for a while, but he knew the rough stretches of the Pinacate country as well as a mountain sheep, and mighty few men were after the job of goin' in there to get him.

"The word that he never missed had gone with him, and he used to go out of his way to show the fitness of that word by showin' up suddenly in some Mexican town and killin' a half-dozen dogs or sheep or

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chickens with as many shots and then ridin' out with that mirthless smile.

"WELL, there's no use settin' here talkin' all night about him. He drifted across New Mexico and West Texas and finally landed down in the Big Bend, where he lined up with one of the many gangs of rustlers and road-agents that hung out down there. He'd marked his trail across the State with several more scrapes and the word went round that he was plumb bad and killin' more and more needlessly; that he no longer gave the other fellow a chance in the draw but beat 'em to it, and even used to use the old trick of pretendin' to turn away, then whirlin' and shootin' at the same time.

"We'd been havin' a good deal of trouble down there with various assorted forms of outlawry—road-agents, cattle-thieves, and such—but one of our main causes for sleeplessness was the rovin' bands of Mexican bandits who'd swoop down on a stage or wagon-train, rob and kill all hands, rustle the stock and disappear again over the border.

"Bill lined up more or less with the white element of the outlaws along the river. From a bad-man he'd sunk till he was just an ornery sneak. If he wanted to get a man now he'd shoot from ambush as soon as from the open, and it wasn't much of a stretch for the conscience that had hunted Apaches for their scalps to do killin's for money.

"Well, one day Sanderson, the cashier of the bank at El Pinar, and Whitney, who ran a big stock outfit near there, with their wives and Whitney's daughter, were traveling down to Marfa. There they could connect with the regular stage-line that would take them eventually to San 'Tonio and the railroad. The road ran through a little cañon and they were ambushed in there by a bunch of greasers. They tried to make a run for it, Sanderson pourin' the leather into their team of broncos and all hands yellin' and shootin'.

"The Mex's were well mounted, however, and gained steadily, so Sanderson swung the team away from the road to the side of the cañon where there was a little cover. They all piled out and crouched among the rocks, determined, Sanderson told me, to sell their lives as dearly as possible and reserve three shots for the women when the last hope vanished.

"But before that time came they had a new player take a hand in the game. Three or four shots rang out over their heads and there was a scramblin' rush through the brush and a white man joined them. It was Trevor. Just what prompted him to sit in with what looked like an already lost game Lord only knows, but join them he did. The Greasers were strung out along the road farther up and down the cañon beyond what Sanderson and Whitney considered reasonable range, but Bill picked up his rifle and fired. One Mex fell and the rest scattered.

"Then there was an hour or so of snipin' back and forth. Whitney got creased across the ribs, but their new ally downed the *hombre* who did it. Then the bandits were quiet for a while, but it was only the lull before the storm. They had retreated to their horses and suddenly the whole bunch came boilin' around the curve and down the road—straight for 'em.

"A cavalry charge ain't nice to stand up against and twenty-five to three is big odds. Sanderson told me he saw Bill's face turn kind of pasty and he laid down his rifle, closin' his eyes like a man that's suddenly taken sick—or like a coward that is suddenly confronted with a situation that requires a brave man to face. Sanderson says he didn't know whether Bill had been hit or whether the sight of the yellin' mob comin' down the road had brought out the yellow in him, but there wasn't time for any examination.

"Closer and closer came the charge and still Trevor crouched there over the rifle he'd dropped. The greasers couldn't have been more than thirty or forty yards away when Bill shook off his daze and leaped to his feet, jumpin' to the top of a big rock in full view of the bandits. His hands flashed down to his hips and his forty-fives came into action. 'The man who couldn't miss' was back on his job as killer. Once the two men saw him sway forward, and once he turned half-way round, but he checked himself both times and remained standin', the big guns roarin' in his hands.

"The yells of the greasers changed from triumph to panic-stricken terror as they saw their companions fall and recognized the sinister figure dealin' out death from the boulder. 'El Pinacate, el Pinacate!' screamed one. Not for nothin' had Bill established his reputation among the little

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villages along the Border. Just the sight of him was enough to take the fight out of most Mexicans.

"The charge broke and the survivors tore off as hard as they could ride. Bill holstered his guns, drew himself up, and then suddenly crumpled and pitched straight down into Whitney's arms. He smiled again, his slow, mirthless smile. 'The man who couldn't miss,' he whispered in Whitney's ear, 'killed by a greaser!' He never spoke again and died about ten minutes later. He'd been shot all to pieces in that last charge.

"Whitney and Sanderson managed to catch up their team and patch the wagon enough to make the trip into town, Bill lyin' in the bottom of the rig with Mrs. Whitney's handkerchief coverin' his face. We buried him in the little cemetery at Marfa, the big forty-fives by his sides with his hands restin' near the square butts just as he used to carry 'em. There wasn't no bands, or no speech-makin', but we couldn't help feelin' that somehow or other by his death he'd made up for some of his life. He'd come clean at the final show-down, and I reckon that counts for somethin' in the big tally. And as soon as they could get the order through from Saint Louis, Whitney and Sanderson put up a monument over him with the same words cut on it that there is on the stone that marks little Sammy Felton's grave:

WILLIAM TREVOR
A good "Bad-Man"
"Greater love hath no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends."

"Now I'm askin' you, thinkin' of Bill Trevor and Sammy Felton together, can you figure the way a man's goin' to cash in from the way he plays the game? Me, I've quit tryin' to."

CRAZY BILLY

***by* Sherman Ripley**

THEY say I'm simple—call me Crazy Billy;
And when I come to town they laugh and call
And ask me, "Are you cold?" Now ain't that silly
With these four vests and this old coverall?
I tell 'em I can't dress like mother Eve,
And what keeps out the heat keeps out the cold.
They ask such foolish questions—won't believe
I'd ruther have my tent begrimed and old,
Than all those human beehives dark as mines
That city folk pretend to call a home.
Shucks! I would sooner read the hidden signs
Of little woodsy creatures in the loam
Than all the highfalutin printed things
That some set so much store by. Song o' brooks
And music of the bluebird as he sings
Are better than the phonygrafts and books
That most folks like. I'd ruther look at flowers
Than all the painted pictures people buy.
Folks talk so much! I talk myself for hours,
Although there may be no one listenin' nigh,
And only birds to answer. Got to go?
They tell me that I'm gettin' worse this Fall!
Sometimes I kinder wonder if they know;
Perhaps they just outnumber me, that's all.

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The Breath of Hell

by Violet M Methley

HERBERT JENFORD, the new manager of the Chatsworth Branch of the Bank of Zealand, dismounted and hung his bridle over the railings outside the bank building.

A handful of houses seemed set down, as it were, promiscuously, in the landscape, without gardens or railings. A red-haired woman nursed a red-haired baby in one doorway, and surveyed the newcomers. Otherwise there was no sign of life, for the diggings were farther down the river by a couple of miles, and the men away all day.

"Wait here a minute, Cis," Jenford laughed, turning to his pretty little wife on her quiet pony. "Robinson mayn't be quite ready to receive ladies."

Mrs. Jenford, used to the extremely sketchy toilets of bush townships, acquiesced placidly, and her husband passed up the narrow path, so thick with dust that his footsteps were deadened and muffled, as if he walked on velvet. He pushed the door open—came to a sudden standstill.

For James Robinson, late manager of the Chatsworth Branch of the Bank of Zealand, was unready to receive visitors. He lay, sprawled in the band of sunlight within the open door. Behind his shoulder the cellular shirt was stained deep red, and a narrow crimson thread straggled across the boards toward the threshold.

One instinct operated swiftly in Herbert Jenford: Cis must not see this thing. Without turning, with eyes still fixed on that still shape, he slammed the door behind him.

It was then only that he became aware of another presence in the room, another face seeming to reflect the horror in his own, and a voice which spoke hurriedly, incoherently:

"Thank Heavens, you've come! What a ghastly business! I've just arrived like yourself to find this—this tragedy. Excuse me."

He paused and wiped his face.

"It's—it's unnerved me," he added.

He was a lank man, exceedingly tall and broad-shouldered, with a lean, stringy throat. That neck seemed, somehow, a hall-mark of his profession, even without the black coat and clerical wideawake which topped his riding-breeches and boots.

"My name's Anson—the Reverend Arthur Anson," he introduced himself. "I was making a round of visits—pastoral, you know."

He laughed half-apologetically.

"Poor Robinson was a friend of mine—a great friend. I was looking forward to a chat and a smoke. This is a terrible shock."

He glanced toward Jenford.

"I suppose there is nothing to be done. I fear I have no knowledge of medicine."

The other, on his knees beside the silent shape, shook his head.

"No, I'm nothing of a doctor either, but it doesn't need one to see that the poor chap's done for. It's an infernally bad business—robbery, of course."

Jenford glanced quickly from the open safe to the forced drawers of the big desk.

"But—I should scarcely have thought it

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worth while for a thief to come here—so remote a township."

"That's where you're mistaken, sir. There's a new diggings within a couple of miles, remember. Why, to my certain knowledge, Robinson had about five hundred pounds' worth of dust here yesterday, and nearly as much again in notes for exchange. Not a bad haul for the brute, by any means."

"You speak from expert knowledge, Mr.—Mr.——?"

"Jenford. Yes. I'm the new manager, as it happens. Robinson was leaving tomorrow, poor chap."

"Then you will naturally take charge of affairs."

The Reverend Arthur Anson breathed a sigh of relief.

"I suppose so," Jenford answered reluctantly. "Although what on earth ought to be done first——"

"If I might advise, I should think that the matter should be reported at once to the police."

"Of course you're right, sir. Where's the nearest station?"

"At Daunton, about nine—ten—miles away, or there is a shorter road through the mountains, by what they call the Devil's Valley. I will go with you, of course."

"It's awfully good of you, sir."

"Not at all; indeed it is only my duty, since I was the first to make this most terrible discovery. But you have a lady with you."

"My wife, yes. She must come too. I can't leave her here. In fact, I'd rather she heard nothing of this ghastly business for the moment. She's not strong, just now. I particularly don't want her worried."

The parson glanced quickly at the boyish, flushed face.

"I quite understand—and agree," he said sympathetically. "And in that case would it not be best to ride straight to Daunton? There is very little use in scaring the women and children here whilst all their men folk are away."

"You're right. I'll lock the door and take the key. We ought to be back with the police before dark."

"Yes, if we start at once. Whilst you go out to your wife, I will fetch my horse from the stable. I had quite anticipated spending the night, you see—my saddlebags are in my usual room."

Jenford passed that silent, sprawling figure with a shudder, and went out into the riotous blaze of sunlight. His wife greeted him with relief.

"At last, Bertie! Oh, it is so hot! I nearly rode on to that red-haired woman's house; she's been smiling at me, and the baby's a darling. Isn't Mr. Robinson ready for me to come in yet?"

"No, not quite."

Jenford tried to speak and look as usual, and failed ignominiously.

"Bertie, how white you are! What's the matter?"

"I'm all right, dear. No, don't get down. The fact is—the fact is, Robinson isn't well, Cis; we're going to fetch a doctor."

"Oh, poor fellow! Is he in bed?"

"No—but he ought to be," Jenford answered slowly.

"Couldn't I stay here to look after him? Wouldn't that be best?"

"No—no. The fact is—" the little man groped wildly for a plausible lie—"he—I—we—we're not sure that it isn't something infectious. You mustn't go near him on any account till—till the doctor's been."

"I see," Mrs. Jenford said dubiously. "Then I suppose the sooner we fetch him, the better. Do you know the way, Bertie?"

"This gentleman is going with us."

Jenford greeted the appearance of the clergyman, leading his horse round the angle of the house, with relief.

"This is my wife, Mr. Anson. I've told her that we—that we're going to fetch the doctor."

"Delighted to meet Mrs. Jenford."

The big parson bowed and smiled pleasantly.

"Shall we start, then? No, we don't go through the township. There's a quicker way to Daunton, as I was saying just now—through the Devil's Valley."

"What a horrid name!" Cis Jenford exclaimed.

"Especially for a clergyman to use? Yes, but it's suitable, very suitable. Volcanic, you know, with hot springs, and so on—a weird, uncanny spot. But you will see for yourselves."

They rode off, Mrs. Jenford and the parson ahead, while the little bank manager followed more slowly. He felt dazed and physically sick with the shock of their discovery, utterly incapable of talking in

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ordinary fashion to his wife. The presence of the clergyman was an immense relief, with his steady flow of casual, commonplace topics.

"Awfully good chap!" Jenford reflected gratefully. "Of course, it's his trade in a way, but still—it's jolly useful."

THE track was gradually ascending and twisting now, while the ground on either side grew higher and the rocks took on strange, fantastic shapes and vivid colorings. Suddenly Mrs. Jenford pointed to a little jetting stream of water with a startled exclamation.

"Why, it's steaming!" she cried.

"Yes, a kind of geyser. Oh, we're very near the central fires of the earth, I believe, here; see how the puffs of smoke rise from those clefts. They opened in an earthquake lately."

"I don't like it!"

Little Mrs. Jenford shuddered.

"It's queer—uncanny."

She laughed nervously.

"I wish you two would smoke or something to make it more homely."

"To tell you the truth, Mrs. Jenford, I was only waiting for your permission."

Anson was already filling his pipe as he spoke. He struck a match and lighted it, shading the bowl with his hand, then turned to extend the little flickering flame to Jenford.

"Won't you smoke too?" he said.

The other hesitated, fumbling in his pocket, then withdrew his hand.

"No, thanks," he said. "I'm rather—rather bilious, I think. Oh, I'm sorry! Did it burn your fingers?"

Anson let the glowing match-end drop hastily.

"Oh, it's nothing—nothing at all!" he said, and turned back to the girl beside him.

But that smoldering pinhead of fire had not reached the ground. Jenford, in his sick, half-dazed state, noticed nothing for some little time. Then he became suddenly aware of the smell of burning, of a creeping, pale-blue smoke spiral.

"I say, stop, sir! You're on fire!" he ejaculated, and urged his horse forward, within reach of the smoldering saddle-bag.

Before the other had time to intervene Jenford was briskly crushing out the fire with his hands.

"It's burnt right through the canvas, sir," he said. "I hope nothing's hurt. What's inside? Clothes or——"

The words died away on his lips. He was staring at the contents of the bag, exposed where the half-charred canvas had broken away under his fingers. Bundles of notes—heavy and bumpy bags—bags, with the name of the Zealand Bank printed blackly upon them!

In his bewildered horror Jenford was unable to hide his sudden knowledge. It was plainly to be read in his face as he met the eyes of the other man; and the answer in those eyes was death.

But almost in the same instant Jenford realized something else. This new and terrible knowledge threatened not only himself, but—Cis. For he was scarcely more than half the murderer's size and unarmed, with no vestige of a weapon upon him.

Perhaps it was the complete unselfishness of the little bank clerk's aim which lent him utterly unwonted power and decision of purpose. He met Anson's hard eyes straight and square, with a hint of defiance and no touch of fear. Even his voice did not tremble.

"I don't think there is much harm done, Mr. Anson, so we may as well push on——"

He paused, and spoke again as if by an afterthought, watching the other man intently.

"Cis, dear, d'you know, I don't see much point in your riding to Daunton with us after all. Look here, go back to that cottage where the red-haired woman was, and ask her if you may wait there until—until I come back. There's the baby; you'll like to play with it; and the woman looked a good sort. I dare say she'd make you some tea, eh? You're always ready for tea, little woman!

"But mind, you're not to go near Robinson; and don't mention him to the woman. If he's infectious, it wouldn't be fair, with children and all——"

It was a big effort, that long speech, when all the time he was watching—watching. *Would Anson let her go?*

"Well, if you really think it would be best, Bertie——"

Cis Jenford was very tired, very hot. The suggestion of a rest and tea was rather shamefully inviting. She felt almost inclined to give in without protest.

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"If you really want me to—" she repeated doubtfully.

"I do, really! You're looking thoroughly done up."

"Very well."

The girl tried hard to smother her sigh of relief.

"You'll be back soon, Bertie?"

"Of course."

Jenford's eyes passed beyond Cis's prettiness to the grim, relentless face of the man behind her.

"Good-by, dearest, and have a good rest!"

He dared not go near her, dared not kiss her or touch her hand; the other might think he was sending a message and stop her. Jenford could only smile and wave his hand as she rode away down the track. And—even now—would Anson let her go?

Anson's hand had stolen behind him as he watched, sitting sidewise in his saddle. And Herbert Jenford, acting on a sudden impulse, thrust his hand, too, under his coat tails, into the place where a pocket might have been—and wasn't!

Something of speculation stole into the eyes of the other man as he noticed the action. Both sat motionless, speechless, until the girl was out of sight.

Out of sight, and safe. Herbert Jenford gave a gasping sigh of relief. Anson gave a short bark of laughter.

"Cleverly worked, by ——!" he cried. "And now, having got her out of the way, you're quite ready to come to terms, eh?"

"Terms?"

Jenford stared at the other man half-stupidly. His wits, strained to the utmost to compass his wife's escape, seemed suddenly lax and feeble.

"Yes. D'you think I'm a fool? Well, what'll you take to hold your tongue—about everything?"

Jenford stared wildly still, but a little flush came into his pale face. So he was to be bribed to keep silent; he was counted already as an accomplice after the act. He was reckoned too weak, too much of a coward, to interfere.

"By ——, I'm not!"

The boy scarcely realized he had spoken aloud until he saw the sudden gleam of anger in the other man's hard eyes.

"Not what?" he snarled fiercely.

"Not quite what you take me for," the little bank clerk retorted unwisely and valiantly. "You'll not make me hold my tongue by bribes, you murderer!"

There was killing in the man's eyes, but he spoke almost temporizingly.

"Come, don't be such a fool, man! Don't force me to go to extremes. You know very well that you're in my power."

Jenford did know it in every nerve and fiber, yet he bluffed bravely.

"Perhaps not quite so much as you think."

His fingers fumbled desperately with the harmless buckle at the back of his breeches.

"You'd better be careful; you'd better keep away——"

Cr-r-r-k!

Jenford ducked instinctively as something whistled past his head. Quick as a lizard, the other had snatched out his revolver. But as he raised it again, Jenford's horse, startled and ill-controlled, reared wildly. The poor brute received Anson's second bullet full in its chest, while the rider sprawled in the road, clear of the lashing hoofs.

Half-stunned, Jenford staggered to his feet. The two horses seemed a plunging, snorting tangle, whence issued Anson's voice uplifted in most unclerical blasphemy. It might be a few moments before he could clear himself—a few moments' respite.

UP THE track Jenford ran, bending low. He dodged round a rock, found himself out of range and sight for the time being, and ran on, the sun hot on the back of his neck.

On, on—and then came the sound of following footsteps, the swift passage of a bullet through the air, a burning pain in his ear. The little man clapped one hand to the side of his head and drew it away, covered with blood. He glanced desperately from side to side for some place of refuge.

To the left a sheer cliff mocked him. To the right—there a break showed a narrow, tortuous gorge. It might lead to some hiding-hole.

Like a hunted animal, Jenford darted sidewise, all other thoughts lost in the blind instinctive dread of imminent death. His breath came in short, agonizing gasps; the sweat streamed down his face, blinding him, as he stumbled on. He was soft and out of training; he knew very well that his strength would not hold out for long.

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And the following footsteps sounded each moment nearer.

Blundering on with lowered head, Jenford ran full into a wall of rock before he realized the truth, which a mocking laugh from behind confirmed. He was in a blind alley, with no way of escape to right or left. But in the yellow, crumbling rock-surface which confronted him there showed a narrow crack about the height of a man, perhaps a foot in width. It opened upon vague dimness within, but there was no time to investigate.

The rock edges tore Jenford's flesh as he forced himself through. Only the utter fear of death could have made the thing possible. The space widened toward the bottom, but he could not wait to crawl. He was through, in an irregular cave, dimly lighted from above.

And here, with his back against the oozy, steaming wall of rock, Jenford knew himself run to earth, cornered, trapped, like a mouse in a pail. Another few moments must see the end, a grimy, sordid end, in this dim, uncanny place, where the air hung foul and mephitic, almost like a tangible vapor.

With hands outstretched to either side of him, the hunted man leaned back, his breath coming in long, sobbing gasps of utter exhaustion, waiting there to be shot down like some wretched rabbit.

He heard Anson's footsteps within twenty yards of him now, heard the man curse as he measured the narrow crack. But that meant no respite; by crawling on hands and knees he could enter the cave easily.

The low, half-moon-shaped opening was darkened by the shape of Anson's head and broad shoulders. A shaft of light from above shone on the revolver in his outstretched hand, on his face, very evil in its triumph.

There was but just room for him to pass through; he was obliged to flatten himself against the cracked, uneven ground.

Inch by inch he advanced, forcing himself through—then suddenly stopped.

As Jenford stared, fascinated, a strange, inexplicable change passed over the murderer's face; the look of ugly triumph gave place to surprise, to anger—to utter, desperate fear. The revolver dropped from his hands; he clutched at his throat, tearing away the collar, as if in suffocation, writhing, gasping for breath, fighting, as it were, with an unseen enemy.

That was how it appeared to Jenford—as if some tangible yet invisible presence were clutching at the man's throat, pressing the life out of him. Gurgling cries escaped him, broken phrases, very horrible to hear:

"Help—oh, God! Hel——"

On the last word he fell forward; his head dropped heavily; and he lay almost motionless, one hand clenching and unclenching in the yellow dust.

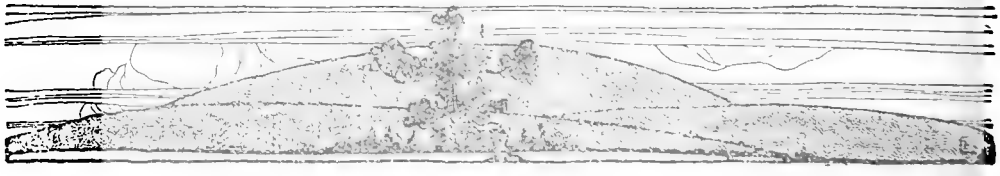
With an effort Jenford wrenched himself from the state of dazed horror into which he had fallen. He stumbled forward, fell on his knees beside the man, stooped to raise his head.

As he did so, a feeling of overpowering, deadly sickness seized him. He caught at his own throat, choking and gasping. He managed to stagger to his feet, but not before a glimpse of the blackened face, of the wide-open, staring eyes, had satisfied him that vengeance, very swift and very sure, had overtaken the murderer.

As Anson himself had truly said, only a thin crust covered the earth's central fires hereabouts. That crust had cracked, and the air just above the level of the ground was laden with deadly gases.

It was as if a very breath from hell itself had slain its servant.

Reckless of torn clothes and flesh, Jenford wrenched himself through the opening, into the clean outer air—and safety.



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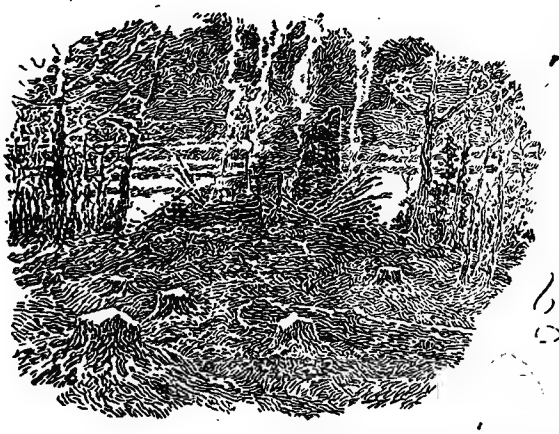

The White Dawn

A FOUR-PART STORY
CONCLUSION

by Hugh Pendexter

Author of "The Crimson Tracks," "The Magic Arrow," etc.

The first part of the story briefly retold in story form

THE year following the capture of New York by the English, General Arnold sent me—Sergeant Cleve Morgan—to Manhattan, disguised as Ambrose Kerry, whose relatives, Madame Betworth and Miss Audrey Betworth, had been captured with their maid, Betsy Osmond, in New Jersey, where I had been serving under Captain Sant. My object was to find out whether Howe intended to push north to join Burgoyne at Albany—or to turn away from him toward Philadelphia.

This was the most dangerous period of the Revolution.

St. Leger, with regulars and Indians, was getting ready to pour down the Mohawk, and General Burgoyne's army had already crossed the Canadian frontier intending to sweep across Lake Champlain and Lake George to Albany.

If the three converging armies met, American independence was lost!

Well, I got the necessary information—but it came at a price. Paul Bowen, who had come to New York separately on the same errand, was killed; and Berce, a patriot from whom I received the information, sacrificed his life in giving his message to me. But I, in turn, shot Colonel Wentsel, the Hessian who killed Bowen—tumbling him off his horse with his own pistol.

On the other hand there were three pleasant phases of this adventure: My old comrade, Bucks, had helped me to escape; during the flight I discovered that old Socrates, the Betworths' servant, was loyal to Washington; and, best of all, Betsy Osmond herself had turned out to be a patriot spy.

Betsy and I reached Washington's headquarters at Ramapo together. Here she left me to rejoin the Betworths, who had been detained there, and whom she really loved—and who loved her.

My own reception was disappointing.

I learned at headquarters that anxiety over Howe's plans had lost its edge, being dulled by increasing worry over Burgoyne's advance upon Ticonderoga—our strongest fortress in the north—with a magnificently equipped army.

Somewhat depressed from the reaction of the strain I had been under, I would have been disheartened at the uselessness of the chances I had taken—at poor Bowen's needless death—at Berce's courageous end—if General Washington's aide hadn't promptly picked me out for another dangerous duty.

I was ordered north with Bucks, to reach General Schuyler's headquarters at Fort Edward, and learn the truth concerning conditions there. We had only reached Schenectady when Bucks had to turn back with a despatch. The first words we had heard on entering the village were:

"Good ——! They've took Ticonderoga!"

Our strongest post in the north had fallen without a shot being fired. The message had been brought south by Tree Breaker, an Oneida chief—an old, true friend of mine; and I persuaded him to join me as I went forward along roads dotted with panic-stricken refugees, through forests that seemed to tremble with fear of the storm of savages sweeping before the white invaders.

I found General Schuyler and learned that he had already sent a report to Washington. But there was more work for me.

"If you want to do a service, sergeant, scout to the east and find General St. Clair and urge him to bring his force to join me."

Between Fort Edward and Fort Anne, after we had passed the axmen who were blocking the trails with crashing timber, we ran into Burgoyne's screen of Indians. These were under the general leadership of Charles Langlade. But the first group we met were under the cold-blooded scoundrel St. Luc de La Corne. We killed two of his Ottawas; but I was trapped into his hands.

All the ferocity of the man now came out. He boldly handed me over to his savages, taunting me as they prepared me for torture. Every trick I could think of I used to gain time. But in the end I gave up.

Just as a warrior was advancing with a torch to fire the brush piled up about me, a cry came from the edge of the forest, and Tree Breaker appeared, claiming the exemption of a bearer of belts. This amazing bit of insolence and courage gained him a hearing among the Indians.

He offered the various chiefs suitable gifts in

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exchange for my life. When all these failed to produce any effect, he suddenly brought forth the belt of a white man. St. Luc de La Corne gave a loud cry—

"It is the belt of Charles Langlade."

With this token of Langlade's captivity in his hand Tree Breaker struck a bargain for my life, promising to have Langlade safe in camp when I was free. But we had not left the Indians more than three miles behind us, when I discovered Langlade himself, unbound, returning with his scouts.

Tree Breaker had risked fearful torture on the strength of a bit of leather carelessly dropped by the savages' leader!

And now behind us a hundred warriors were speeding along the trails in pursuit; behind them others swarmed; it seemed impossible for us to escape the net St. Luc was throwing about us!

CHAPTER IX

THE RED RAID

WE STUCK to the trail until we came to a sluggish stream cutting it from the east. Into this we waded and followed some distance up-stream before the Oneida found a suitable place for leaving it. He selected a spot where the spring freshets had undercut the bank and left the scrub spruce leaning over the water. Flitting from tree to tree we held to the east, hoping to encounter the advance of St. Clair's army. Instead the Oneida picked up several empty cartouche-boxes. The paper case, filled with ball and powder were supplanting the powder horn in popularity. Showing me the boxes he said—

"These were dropped by Americans."

He scouted the ground for a short distance to the south and signaled me to come to him. He was standing on the edge of a fresh trail, much wider than any ever left by the red men, which proved the passage of a large number of white men. They had not bothered to practise woodcraft.

"The men of the Thirteen Fires left these signs. They went to Fort Edward. Walked fast," said the Tree Breaker.

A brief examination of the odds and ends discarded by a considerable number of men traveling rapidly told the whole story. St. Clair, by a hundred-mile detour had escaped from the Grants and was now at, or near, Fort Edward. According to the letter of my orders my work was finished and I was free to retreat to the fort. But it was important that General Schuyler should learn how the enemy was progressing.

Even with the accession of St. Clair's force Edward would not have more than forty-five hundred, and all of these would not be fit for duty, and many would be lacking proper equipment. Burgoyne was within a day's forced march of the fort, reckoning by distance only. His army was double that of the American force. It was my duty to scout the advancing army and determine the rapidity of its progress. I explained this to the Oneida, who was much pleased at the prospect of more encounters with Indian allies.

"Let my white brother keep in the woods and away from the fort, where men curl up like dead leaves and die," he advised me.

So we worked east until confident St. Luc's savages were off the trail, then we swung to the north. That night after we had camped the Oneida left me and was gone until early morning. I stayed awake, fearing he had been overdaring. When he returned he was carrying a bow and a quiver of arrows. He dropped to the ground and did not speak for several minutes. Finally he said:

"With the first light the Tree Breaker began to run. He has run very far and fast. He has looked on the fires of Burgoyne's camp. Many new Ottawas have joined the army. The capture of Ticonderoga will bring in many more. The Ottawas were dancing two scalps. There were so many new Indians with the soldiers that the Tree Breaker picked up a blanket and crawled close. He found a Seneca full of rum.

"We talked under a tree," he continued. "The Seneca said the scalps they were dancing were taken from white men who were friends to Burgoyne's army, white men who left Argyle to join the army. There were many white men and some women in the camp, crowding together like sheep, afraid of the Indians. The Seneca said Burgoyne could not make his red children behave."

"You have not been to Fort Anne?" I incredulously asked.

"The Tree Breaker kept near Burgoyne's camp. When Burgoyne goes to Fort Anne then the Tree Breaker will go there and leave the marks of his claws on the heads of the western Indians."

It was not more than a dozen miles from Skenesborough to Fort Anne, where our Colonel Long had all but whipped Colonel Hill on the eighth and had burned the old

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fort and had fallen back to Edward. I could not understand why Burgoyne had not reached the site of the ancient fort. By patience I learned from my friend how the British general had lost time in setting out from Skenesborough after sending Hill and a large force of Indians ahead, and that St. Luc's Indians belonged to this advance force.

The main army, it appeared from the Oneida's talk, was barely crawling through the tangle left by the American axmen. My friend explained how it was necessary for Burgoyne to cut roads for every foot of the way his men and guns advanced, to build bridges over every stream and bit of marsh land. In addition to these difficulties the army could travel no faster than its commissariat, as the thinly settled country had been combed clean of livestock.

In conclusion the Oneida said—

"Another sleep will pass before Burgoyne sees the black logs of Fort Anne."

New hope strengthened me. If Burgoyne moved thus slowly there might be time for General Schuyler to restore the fighting spirit of his men, to overcome in a degree a lack of supplies, and, if he could not make a stand at Edward, to fall back in good order down the Hudson. A retreat would compel the enemy to lengthen the line to his base of supplies.

"The drunken Seneca said the Old Father (Sir Guy Carleton) would not send more soldiers to Burgoyne. He said the Indians liked the Old Father best, and if the Americans turned around and knocked off the heads of the English the Indians would run back to Canada."

The last could be taken for granted. The capture of Ticonderoga was sure to draw in a host of ungovernable red raiders; but let Burgoyne experience a setback and his savage friends would vanish like the first frost before the noonday sun. The statement that Carleton would not reenforce Burgoyne was too good news to be true. I could not credit it, although very soon I was to learn the intoxicated Seneca had the truth of it. Without fresh replacement troops for his army, and the garrisons he must leave behind him Burgoyne would learn that every mile of advance created a new problem for him to solve.

"We must sleep a few hours and then hurry back to General Schuyler," I said.

"The White One is a wise man. His *orenda* is mighty. He will be wiser if he listens to what his *orenda* is trying to tell him now—to sleep no more. He must run away, or be captured."

I did not understand. There were no signs of the enemy, yet the Oneida was erect and ready for flight. I demanded an explanation. He answered:

"I killed the Seneca. My blanket fell aside and he saw the mark on my chest. He was not so crazy he could not understand the Bear sitting up and breaking a tree. So I killed him but did not scalp him; for he was drunk, and once we were brothers in the Long House. They will find him under his blanket. They will send many Ottawas to look for a fresh trail. Even the Bear does not travel fast in the night without leaving signs. What does my white brother's *orenda* say to him now?"

"Run for it!" I exclaimed in English.

And once more we were off through the steaming woods. It was cruel work and there was no cessation. By midday I was fairly blown. The Oneida made no complaint, although the sweat had smeared the pattern of his painted face. When I threw myself on a bed of pine needles he did not demur, and for two sweet hours we rested. My friend observed me tightening my belt, as I had eaten nothing since I was St. Luc's prisoner.

He took his bow and arrows and slipped away and it was not long before he returned with a brace of grouse, or spruce-partridge as the New England men call them. These we dressed and cooked over a tiny fire and left only the feathers and bones. Greatly refreshed we resumed our flight toward Fort Edward. Our rest under the pines, however, had well near been fatal. I was apprised of that fact when a gun exploded on our right. The ball went wild, indicating an Indian marksman. After shifting his position to a safe distance the fellow gave the discovery-cry and was answered from several points.

Either St. Luc's savages, or Burgoyne's newcomers, or both, were sweeping the country ahead of the enemy army. The Oneida and I swung farther to the south to get ahead of them. My friend was sore disgruntled that he could not stop and stalk the man who fired on us.

At last I panted—

"We are ahead of them!"

"The White One's *orenda* is old and foolish to tell him that," was the grim reply,

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yet the Tree Breaker slowed his pace. I could see or hear nothing to indicate a hostile presence. The Oneida, however, insisted we halt behind a huge pine. As we stood there, as I believed wasting precious time, I glimpsed a furtive form gliding behind a tree not a hundred feet from our position. Even as I called the Oneida's attention to the fellow a second figure flashed across our field of vision.

"Two!" grunted the Tree Breaker, pulling an arrow from his quiver.

A face painted red and black showed for a second, first on one side of the tree, then on the other. The Oneida whispered:

"When you fire they will run in to get your scalp before you can load. They do not know we are two here. Be ready and fire. We must go."

I threw myself flat and slowly pushed the rifle barrel over the root of a tree and waited. The red and black face appeared and vanished. I shifted my aim to the other side of the tree and fired just as the ferocious visage appeared there. The fellow went down without a sound, the bullet catching him in the head. I was surprized at my success as my shooting was almost mechanical. As the decoy fell his companion sounded his war-cry and dashed toward me swinging his tomahawk.

When half-way to the tree the Oneida's bow twanged and the savage went to his knees clawing at a long arrow buried in his chest. His war-cry had been heard, however, for it was being answered from several points north and west of us. I started running south, but the Oneida held back. When he overtook me he had completed his coup by raising a scalp.

"A Mississauga and a Fox," he informed me as he trotted at my heels." The Mississaugas were taken in by the Long House before the French war. I placed him with his face toward the west. He was a brave man. The other was bad flesh. I left his scalp beside him so his people would know the Tree Breaker did not look on him as a warrior. The Oneidas began killing the Fox people long before the white men came."

He held his tongue and glided by me to take the lead; for he knew a cloud of Indians were searching for us. We heard them at times crashing through the undergrowth in the hard timber, throwing caution aside as they believed they had us cornered. Once we saw a dozen or more running like shadows along the clear ground under the evergreens; and I had difficulty in keeping the Oneida silent. They signaled each other repeatedly.

A wailing cry told of the finding of the two dead warriors. The discovery afforded them a fresh starting point, and they radiated east, south and west. Before we realized our danger our way to the west was blocked. The only clear path was that leading south and the savages were racing to close this by forming a huge circle, those on the east and those on the west swerving in to form a junction.

The Oneida was now almost beyond control. His nostrils pinched in and his small eyes glittered wickedly. Every savage in the trackless forest was a challenge to his bravery. When they called him *Royana* they expanded his pride to the bursting point.

"My *orenda* is mighty," he hissed. "I have promised it I would follow the sun."

I knew we must separate, for I would not turn to the west; nor would he break a silent vow made to his *orenda*.

"Take your talk to General Schuyler. Tell him what you learned at Burgoyne's camp. I go south."

I knew he was loath to part from me. I knew he was a real friend, who counted no sacrifice too great if it benefited me. I have since wondered if his vow was not a convenient ruse to draw the savages after him and leave me a less hazard to meet in my southward flight. As the sunset of life draws nearer I am confident his promise to his *orenda* was his indirect way of serving me. And he left me.

HE LEFT me without a word, or a hand clasp. Because I was a white man I ran a greater risk than he, although he followed the most dangerous path. I have known white men who excelled the red in forest craft, but their number is small and I was not one of them. I never met red or white who could outpoint the Oneida in bush cunning. If he withstood the temptation to indulge in foolhardy exploits I believed he could win through the wild horde.

A short time after we separated I heard yelling in the west. I could not tell whether it marked the discovery of my friend, his capture, or was incited by rage at some kill

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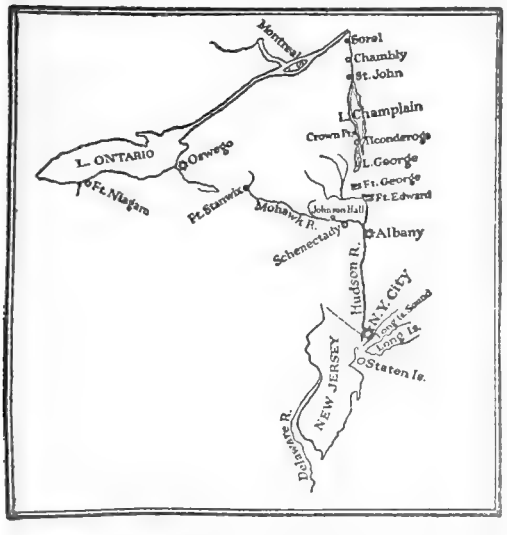
he had made. The heavy growth muffled and distorted the sound and I could not estimate the distance. I continued south and saw no signs of the enemy. Believing I had passed ahead of the western band, and was outside the circle I turned toward the Hudson, and within ten minutes' travel again discovered them ahead of me. I was now convinced the woods were overrun with Indians and that the Oneida and I were but incidental game.

Resuming the southern course I made good progress. I passed Argyle, now practically deserted, and saw several cabins ruined by recent fires. The Tories in that neighborhood had suffered cruelly from Burgoyne's red forces. As evening closed in I took refuge on a low ridge near a spring. The woods contained a grove of oak and the hillside was alive with squirrels. With



a root for a club I knocked over several squirrels and broiled them over a tiny fire. I had extinguished the fire, and buried it with dirt; and was eating my unseasoned supper when through the dusk at the foot of the ridge passed a file of men.

They were making southwest, and from their noiseless gait and the forward pitch of their bodies I knew they were Indians, although it was too dark to distinguish them by dress, or lack of it. Burgoyne might be greatly delayed in reaching Fort Edward, but there was no questioning the screen of Indians he had thrown forward to cover his advance. I slept until two hours after midnight and then continued my flight.

I traveled but a short time when I stumbled upon the outskirts of a camp. It must have been that of the Indians who had passed me at the ridge. From the number of smoldering fires and the several sentinels, widely separated, I estimated fifty warriors were within pistol-shot of me. The sentinel nearest me had his blanket over his head and I withdrew without being discovered. I lost no time in leaving that vicinity. There must have been various other bands abroad, for as the day advanced I heard their signals, and what was alarming was the rapid advance of a considerable number behind me.

Their shouting back and forth told me they did not suspect my presence. This general movement could only mean raids on the little settlements and isolated homes scattered through the forest north of, and on, the Hoosic. In truth I could not see much to prevent their carrying the ax and torch to the outskirts of Albany unless General Schuyler should retreat down the Hudson and oppose them. Such a maneuver was out of the question; for our northern army must be kept intact to check Burgoyne. To warn the settlers of the Indians' approach became my work.

Only those who have lived on the border and have witnessed the atrocities of Indian warfare can gage the chill of terror which the word of their coming causes. Men who can face death smilingly as soldiers and rangers may be seized with a panic when told in the presence of their women folks and children that Huron or Ottawa is upon them. It was on the edge of dusk when I broke into a small clearing some four miles above the Tomhanic, a small tributary to the Hoosic.

Smoke was issuing from the mud-and-stick-chimney of the one log cabin and a woman was singing to a little one. That note of maternity in the heart of a wilderness given over to life-killing affected me tremendously. It was an augury all convincing. Destiny was not to be thwarted by white and red pygmies slaying each other in the dark archways of an ancient forest. Only by exterminating the love of home, the love for little children, could the age old savagery of the continent continue its sway.

The crooning voice of the mother, if it reached the Indians, was surely misinterpreted by them. They believed it to be but the voice of another victim. In my

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heart I felt it was the voice of a republic which would endure so long as motherhood was honored and homes were loved.

I ran half-way across the clearing before being accosted. Then a man thrust his shaggy head from the door, gave me one glance then slammed the door shut.

"The Indians are coming!" I called out. And the singing ceased. "They will be here before morning. Take your people and start for Albany. Cross the river at Stillwater if you can."

"Who be ye? Who be ye to tell such lies?" cried the man in a trembling voice.

"Open the door. It's but one man. He's a white man," the woman commanded. A child sent out a shrill scream of fear. The mother hushed it.

"Jest throw that gun one side if ye wanter come in," said the man.

"Fool! I am but one man. I do not want to come in. I come to warn you. I will not harm you. I am an American soldier."

"Then they're Gineral Burgoyne's Injuns," yelled the fellow. Next he boasted: "I won't budge. They won't tech a hair on my head. They know I'm a good royalist. Say, Mister Rebel, guess I oughter shoot ye."

"Stop! Stop!" fiercely commanded the woman. "He came to help us."

"The Indians will be here within a few hours," I repeated, stepping behind a stump. "Take your children and go now. I must go on and warn others. You have your chance. Remember Burgoyne's savages take Tory as well as Whig hair. The Argyle cabins are in ashes; some of the settlers have been killed."

The door flew open with a bang, and the woman, her hair straggling, ran out with an ax in her hand. At first I thought she was intending to attack me, but after one quick glance she leaned forward and stared wide-eyed at the silent forest.

"I hate ye! I hate ye!" she passionately cried. "Always spewing out wickedness! Jim Henry, catch the hoss. Stranger, ye must be hungry. Come in and squat long enough for some bear meat. We ain't got much, but ye're welcome."

The man ran from the house, then back again, his tremulous voice complaining: "Hoss gone an' strayed. Can't never find him it's so dark."

"Ye coward!" I heard her grate. And picking up her skirts and swinging the ax she strode to the dark woods and disappeared. I would have gone for her, but I knew she was in no danger. It would be several hours before the Indians would come. I entered the cabin and found two children, a girl in log cradle, a little boy sitting beside her holding a tiny hand. In his free hand was grasped a clumsy case-knife.

The boy made no outcry and the determined set of his little jaws was inherited from the mother. The man alternately tore at his hair and locked his fingers together and pulled them apart. He was beyond noticing me. So I packed up what provisions I could find and filled a jug with water. Of the meat I ate sparingly. By the time I finished the woman returned leading the horse. I passed the baby up to her after she had mounted and placed the boy on behind her. She retained the ax. The man slung on the package of food and taking his fire-lock entered the southern trail, the woman riding behind him.

"I ain't thanked ye yet," she called back to me. "But I do thank ye. Guess I'm upsot at having to be both man'n woman of the fambly. But I can't blame Jim Henry much, as I never married him for a fighter."

"Hold due south. I think you'd better not try for Stillwater. With the lead you have you can get beyond the Hoosic; then it's only twenty miles to Albany with small chance of the Indians going beyond the river."

I NEVER saw them again, but I have no doubt as to their escape, for the man knew the country and was no laggard when it came to flight. I held back and allowed them a long lead. When I took the trail I did not catch up with them and a deserted cabin a mile farther on told me Jim Henry had started the occupants on their flight. That this second family's departure had been recent and very hurried was proven by the fire in the fireplace before which a pan of bread was browning. I appropriated the bread and resumed my journey. A red glow in the northern sky marked a burning cabin, but it was too far away to be Jim Henry's home. Rosy areas in the eastern sky bespoke of more flaming cabins. The entire region from Skenesborough south was passing under the ax.

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The rough trail from Henry's place now became a narrow country road, deep rutted. I followed this for less than a mile when I came to cleared ground near the center of which stood a pretentious two-story building built of brick. The house was dark and I assumed it was deserted until a dog barked and a voice called to the brute to be silent. It was a woman's voice.

"Ho, the house!" I cried. "The Indians are coming. Get up and escape."

The dog barked wildly. The woman replied:

"We've been told that silly story before this night. Move on so we may sleep."

"Look to the north, to the east! Those are not camp-fires you see. If you wait till morning you will be too late."

There was a minute of silence. The dog had decided my errand was legitimate and barked no more. The woman at last asked—

"Who are you?"

"American soldier. You waste precious time."

"You are frightened, American soldier. There is no danger. Besides, we are for the king."

There was a cool insolence in the voice that snapped my restraint.

"So were the Argyle settlers for the king and last night the Ottawas danced their scalps. You will surely be killed unless you go now. There are other families to warn and I can't let them be caught because I stayed and argued with a silly woman."

Another woman broke in, speaking to the first in a low, hurried tone. The words were unintelligible, but the note of fear could not be mistaken.

"Nonsense! The man is frightened. He's some deserter. The American army has been wofully whipped."

"But the flames! I see them! They're burning Ricket's cabin! He was a good king's man. The next one, to the east, is Stoner's!" shrilly cried the second woman. And a light sprang up, the light of a candle.

I lost the rest of the colloquy as there came a banging of doors and a man's hoarse voice cursing the stubbornness of some fastening. The man was at the barn and I heard him cry out to a horse. Very soon the animal turned the corner of the house with a figure on its back. I ran forward and seized the rope bridle and the fellow kicked me in the head. As he had not paused to pull on his boots the blow did nothing more than to enrage me. I yanked him to the ground and buffeted him smartly according to the Mosaic law.

"Lem'me be! Git away! Injuns comin'! I won't be sculped!" he howled.

I cracked him over the head to restore his reason and began quieting the horse. Something sprang against me and almost sent me sprawling. It was the dog, probably released when the man opened the barn door. The animal must have decided I was a friend, for he offered me no hurt but fell to whining most dolefully. Securing the horse to a hitching-post I gave my attention to the house. Lights were now burning down stairs and through the window I saw two women.

One was seated and thoroughly composed. The other was flying hysterically about the room. Both had dressing gowns over their night-gear, and as it was no time for the conventions, I called on them to start at once if they would save their lives.

The front door flew open. The frightened woman was standing on the stoop with a candle in her hand, her hair in disorder and great fear graven in her plump face.

"You'd better be careful!" she wildly warned me. "My husband is Captain Colmwood of the King's Royal Regiment."

"Johnson's Royal Greens," I said, giving Sir John Johnson's Tryon county men the name they were always called because of their green coats. "Madame, if you will leave now I will escort you south. There are other familes to warn. I can not waste any more time here."

The horse snorted behind me and I turned in time to catch the man trying to mount and ride away. This time I used the fellow roughly. The noise of the brief scuffle brought the second woman to the door. She stood behind Mistress Colmwood and the candle illumined her face. Had General Burgoyne himself confronted me I could not have been more astounded. For this woman was Audrey Betworth, and the sight of her played havoc with my common sense.

"Sergeant Morgan, at your service, Mistress Betworth," I saluted, advancing into the candle light.

"You have a way of turning up unexpectedly," she said, after a little start of surprize. "I see you have taken our only horse. Be satisfied and go."

"I will give you women five minutes in

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which to make ready for the journey," I replied.

"And after five minutes?" she quietly asked.

"I'll tie the two of you, throw you on the horse and take you to Albany."

"You beast," she whispered.

"The first minute will soon be up."

"Oh, let us go! Let us go! There's another fire much nearer!" shrieked Mistress Colmwood.

Audrey Betworth was very statuesque in her indignation, and, retrospection tells me, a bit theatrical. She stood with her flimsy gown clutched at the neck, her proud head thrown back and her eyes blazing defiance at me. What would have been the outcome of my threat and her certain resistance must ever remain a matter of conjecture; for while we faced each other there came a wailing and shouting up the rough road, women and children raising a chorus of lamentation. Mistress Colmwood all but collapsed. Audrey Betworth put aside her anger and ran down the steps. I carried out her unspoken wish by hastening to meet the newcomers. Before I reached them a woman gave a strident yell, and shrieked:

"Oh, God! They've killed all the Burnhams!"

"They'll kill us next! They're chasing us!" sobbed a young maid.

When they entered the cleared ground I found there were five of them, two matrons and three children. I shook the shrieking woman until she stilled her tongue. I assured them they had ample time to escape if they would cease their noise and follow the road south. Then I asked where their men folks were.

"They stuck behind to hold 'em back," wearily explained the woman I had shaken. "Guess my head's wrong. I've been churnin' an' washin', an' it's been so hot an' muggy."

"Billy Burnham's killed. He played with me sometimes. But they didn't kill my dolly!" cried a little miss, and she thrust a doll made of a rag into the light of the candle held by Audrey Betworth. Mistress Audrey picked her up and kissed the small face, then whistled sharply. The dog, a big fellow, came bounding forward, and with a thin cry of joy the child threw her arms about the shaggy neck.

"Go with the little girl." commanded Mistress Audrey.

"Pass on!" I told the group. "Others will soon join you."

As they made across the clearing, the dog walking by the child, I ran back to prevent another attempt to steal the horse.

Mistress Colmwood entered the house, weeping bitterly. Audrey Betworth hurried to half-support her and comfort her. I was surprized to find the man servant had not disappeared. Whether he discovered a sense of shame in his system, or whether habit held him close to his mistress once his crazy fears were interrupted, I do not know. But he was there with the horse, waiting for some one to command him. I ordered him to pull a carriage or cart from the barn. He meekly ran to obey. I called after the fugitives to wait and the children could ride.

They halted. From the north came the faint sound of a musket shot.

"Our men'll hold 'em back!" groaned one of the women. "But they'll burn the cabin an' all the yarn! Oh, sorry me!"

I ran to the door and called up the stairs—

"Aren't you nearly ready?"

"In a moment," Audrey Betworth calmly replied. "There's nothing to stop you from going on ahead."

"You're mistaken. There are three children, and they'll not go until you do. I'm waiting to follow after them. Guns are being fired just north of us."

The mention of the children brought her fluttering down the stairs, the intoxicating negligence of the boudoir only partly concealed by the long traveling cloak. I was glad to note she had replaced the slippers with stout boots. "You need not wait any longer. My friend will come in a minute," she told me.

"Good Lord! Can't you hurry?" groaned the servant.

"I shall wait until the children start," I told her, and then returned to the servant. He had the horse harnessed to a carriage and the women and children were already in it. Mistress Colmwood soon appeared carrying a huge bundle. Behind her walked Audrey Betworth with a long pistol. I took the bundle of clothing and found it to be too bulky to be accommodated in the carriage and tossed it back into the hall. This left Mistress Colmwood with a small box which contained, I assumed, her jewels. I ordered the servant to get down and walk so that the two women might ride, but Audrey Betworth countermanded:

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"Stay where you are, Joseph. I will walk. I prefer to."

So the carriage started down the road with Audrey Betworth walking behind it pistol in hand. Half a dozen fires were now painting the sky. She called back to me—

"I thought you were in a hurry, Sergeant Morgan."

"Go on! Go on! I'll be coming soon."

"Don't be silly. I didn't mean what I said about your going ahead. Come along."

"I'll soon overtake you," I impatiently told her. "I can make faster progress than the carriage. Go on!"

They vanished in the dark forest road. I returned to the north side of the opening and waited. My fears that the savages were closer than I had first thought was now proven by the discharge of several guns near at hand and the shouting of white men, stabbed through with the terrible scalp-cry. I wondered which of the two matrons was a widow.

The sound of the carriage had died away. The shouting of the men quickly ended. There had been but one scalp-yell. Then of a sudden the clumping of heavy boots over the rough road disturbed the quiet of the night. The settlers were falling back on the run. When they got so close that I could hear them panting for breath I softly called out:

"Take it easy. I'll help you."

"Who'n —— are you?" demanded a fierce voice, and a fire-lock clicked.

"Don't spill your priming or lose your flint. I've just sent two women and three children toward Albany in a carriage, also two women from this house."

I advanced and made out three figures.

"Who are you?" repeated the first speaker. I told him.

"Whig or Tory it don't make no differ when it comes to fighting off them red ——," he said. "Guess we've fell back too fast. Oughter snubbed 'em up more. But there's a million of 'em. Woods chuck full of 'em. They almost surrounded us. Got our hired-hand."

I RAPIDLY outlined a plan. We fell back to where the road entered the forest on the south side of the cleared land, numbering four guns and my two Highland pistols. The savages would make for the Colmwood house, the burning candles inviting them to plunder. We could pick off some of them and demoralize the rest a bit. Every minute we held them back might mean a life saved. Then my wits quickened, and I said:

"Stay here while I look for more guns. We'll make them think we're a dozen."

With that I raced to the house and began a hurried search of the ground floor. In the living room I found two flint-locks in excellent condition, a good supply of powder and lead, and two long pistols. Returning to the front hall I took advantage of the candle light to load the four pieces. My comrades were greatly heartened by the additional arms. Only a few of the Indians, they said, had arms. Personally I feared their arrows more in bush fighting than I did trade-muskets.

Fully fifteen minutes elapsed and we were beginning to fear the Indians had passed our position under cover of the woods when one of the men grabbed my arm. A figure was running noiselessly toward the lighted house. Others emerged from the forest until there was a long string of them. We tried to count them and our estimate ranged from forty to fifty. I believe the first number was nearer correct.

This must have been the band I had passed the night before. In approaching the house they split into two files so as to encircle it. I warned my companions to hold their fire until several were bunched together between us and the light. A savage stole up to a window and peered in. The empty room encouraged others to creep to the door. They must have perceived the place was abandoned and yet they hesitated as though fearing a trap.

Those first at the door held back while others joined them. I was about to give the word to fire when one of them found the bundle of clothing discarded by Mistress Colmwood. As it was thrown outdoors the group disintegrated and inside of a few minutes a dozen of the wretches were dancing about, grotesquely garbed in my lady's finery.

They soon wearied of this sport, however, and ran back to the door and jammed more closely before the entrance. This was our time. "We'll hold the two fire-locks and pistols in reserve. Load as quickly as possible after firing. Now, all together!"

The crash of the three fire-locks and my rifle made a brave noise, and our lead blasted an opening through the huddled

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mass. It would have been easy and perhaps wise to have snatched up the remaining weapons and scored more hits during the fraction of a minute that the savages remained paralyzed, but I dared not risk it. We had commenced to reload by the time the Indians recovered their wits to scatter for cover. They howled most marvelously.

Such a rugged welcome had not been suspected. Those who had guns fired, not at us but at the house. Plainly they believed the lighted house was the bait to the trap and contained some defenders. I counted six rigid forms before the door.

One of the men advised shifting our position a bit deeper into the woods, but close to the road. This we did. The clearing was quiet. We listened keenly but heard no sounds of a stealthy approach. I do not believe they had a very good idea whence came the volley, as all were intent on the hallway.

"Something's smokin'," muttered one of the men.

"They've fired the house," whispered another. This proved the Indians connected the empty structure with the death-dealing volley. I suddenly remembered that the house was made of brick and the rosy light showing through the growth must emanate from the barn. A reconnaissance proved this reason to be correct. The barn was burning like tinder and the savages were skricking and dancing madly.

"They got rum out the cellar," declared the man beside me. "They're half drunk."

"Godfrey! But they've set fire to the house now," murmured another. By the light of the burning barn we could see white smoke rolling through the windows of the second story. A bright glare reddened the bulkhead opening and a creature ablaze crawled forth and rolled about shrieking on the grass.

"After rum. Candle set spirits afire. That fellow did a good job on hisself," mumbled my companion.

When the flames followed the smoke through the windows and the roof began to show red the clearing became as light as day. Some of the Indians retained their senses and began scouting the edge of the forest while others called out loudly to the drunken dancers.

"Chiefs telling them to hide up," warned one of my companions.

As he spoke he fired at an Indian running from behind the barn to gain the woods. He caught him through the hips as shown by the wounded man's efforts to drag himself along on his elbows, his legs trailing helpless. We accepted this as our signal and emptied three more guns. But we had betrayed our position and we were soon to learn that the raiders were not all drunk. We hastily fell back through the woods and gained the road, two to a side, each couple having an extra fire-lock and a pistol. We continued our agreement of holding the extra arms in reserve. We had the advantage of position so long as the fire raged, for what light filtered through the woods and poured down the road caused the warriors to stand out like so many black silhouettes against the fiery background.

Three were foolish enough to enter the road.

"We got 'em," called one of the men opposite us. My companion and I held our fire. The two guns barked close together. One warrior fell on his face, a second floundered into the bush sorely wounded. The third escaped. Next came a rush through the timber. The two men slipped back and rejoined us and were seen crossing the road. With howls of triumph a dozen warriors ran after them, to secure them before they could reload. My companion and I let drive. They were almost upon us when the two extra fire-locks and pistols were discharged point blank. Then they had us for the taking and were about to make the final rush when my Highland pistols threw them into a bit of a panic. Perhaps they believed there was a man for every gun fired. Any way, six of the twelve turned and fled.

We were sorely tempted to imitate their example and cut and run for it, but we knew that more white men were killed while trying to run away than have died standing their ground. So we did not move until all our weapons were reloaded and even then our retreat was made by piecemeal. Two of us would fall back under cover of the guns of the two sticking to their post. When those retreating were strongly posted a low whistle would allow the rear guard to withdraw.

In this way two guns were always ready to check any rush. The second time we tried this simple strategy we were rushed by the nearest warriors. The prompt fire from behind us halted the savages long enough for us to take another stand which we held

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until our friends had reloaded and withdrawn. This mode of retreat was excellent so long as we faced toward the brightly illuminated clearing and so long as the enemy did not outflank us. If not for the women and children ahead we could have made fast progress and evaded them entirely.

"Woods is full of the skunks," said one of my new friends. "Well, they paid high for Hirum's hair."

I took it that Hiram was the hired-hand.

The light from the fire suddenly decreased. The night was clear and it was possible to distinguish objects in the road up to a hundred feet. In the woods the darkness was baffling and we had to depend on our ears to ward off a sudden attack. Our advantage was our knowledge that any sound we heard must be hostile, while the Indians, widely scattered, ran the risk of potting one of their own men. There was no more fighting, however, and when we came to the Tomhanic, a mountain stream, in the early dawn there was no sign that we were being pursued.

My companions led the way to the estate of John J. Bleecker, a New York gentleman, who followed his wife's inclination for the scenery of the wilds. The estate was as isolated as it was beautiful. The house was closed, but in the yard leading to the outbuildings were two score settlers and a dozen carts. There were more women and children than men, far more. The men had remained behind to cover the flight of their helpless ones.

Leaving my companions to find their families and to help in the preparation of the morning meal I scouted our back track for a mile and cast about in a wide half-circle to make sure none of the Indians were approaching us by stealth. I found no signs, but met four woodsmen and turned back with them. They were anxious to learn about their families and I encouraged them to expect finding them at the Bleecker house, which proved to be the case.

Before we reached the Tomhanic other settlers straggled in to join us until we numbered an even dozen. Several of these bore the marks of hand to hand conflicts, one having an arrow through his forearm. On reaching the house we learned that seven more men had wandered in and the reunited families were very happy, and very sympathetic for those who waited in vain for the north woods to give up their loved ones. It was the general opinion of these settlers that no Indians were within two miles of the Tomhanic and not likely to venture farther south.

WHEN we sat down to eat of the food prepared over several fires a woman said to her daughter—

"Go ask the lady if she won't have a bite."

The girl ran for the grove back of the house and I asked:

"Who is the lady?"

"Oh, one of them uppity-uppity ones. Too good to eat with common folks, I guess."

Soon the maiden returned, and walking by her side and holding her brown hand in the most democratic fashion was Audrey Betworth. With a smile that transfigured her beautiful face, she said to the silent group of women:

"Now I will eat. Until I knew Sergeant Morgan was safe I had no appetite. Now I am famously hungry."

"Sergeant Morgan? Your man?" bluntly asked a woman.

Again that wonderful smile, accompanied by a quizzical glance at me:

"No, not my man. But my good friend, I hope," she replied.

"Always that, Mistress Audrey Betworth," I declared, happier than King George could be could he hear he had put down the rebellion. "Where is Mistress Colmwood?"

"On her way to Albany."

"You should have gone with her."

"It's only twenty miles to Albany. I can walk it easily. You had to fight, I suppose."

"Fight!" exclaimed a man. And he suspended his voracious eating to declare: "He fought like a hogshead of devils, ma'am. Guess we all fit our bigness. Must 'a' killed twenty of the brutes." (This was putting the figure a trifle high, although we had made a handsome bag.) "But he sorter bossed things and kept us humping."

I briefly explained the peaks of our experience, giving my companions their due and proving there were no particular heroes among us. I also called attention to those settlers who had stayed behind longer than we had.

"Of course," she simply commented when I had finished. "But their women didn't make a fuss about being saved. They didn't act silly as I did."

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"I guess, ma'am, we didn't have no time to pamper our women folks," spoke up the man who pictured me as a master Indian-fighter. "When I found my cow butchered two miles from the cabin I lit out. When I made the cabin I give the word sharp. If there'd been any fiddle-diddling I'd fetched my old woman a crack over the head, thrown her and a bag of meal across a hoss, took the younker on my shoulder and lit out. But she was as spry to quit as I was. And here we all be, thank God!"

"Amen to that!" softly said Mistress Audrey. "Now that we're all safe I suppose we must start for Albany."

"We'll see our women that far, then we're going to show them red devils what a real fight is," said a hawk-faced individual.

"They're Burgoyne's Indians. Some of you are king's men," I said.

"Mebbe we was king's men once, but we're ag'in-all-Injuns men now. We fight on the side that's ag'in Injuns. That's all," declared one who had formerly posed as Tory.

I tried to find room in a cart or carriage for Mistress Audrey, but she would not ride. She insisted she was better able to walk than woman, child, or man. We strung out in a long procession and I had the great privilege of walking by her side and being treated as a friend. She told me how she and her mother and Betsy Osmond went to Albany from Ramapo and how she had gone out to visit the Colmwoods, never dreaming of danger.

"It's marvelously strange that the only danger I should be in resulted from General Burgoyne's winning a great victory."

"I'd scarcely call it that," I ventured to doubt. "He has taken Ticonderoga without a fight. It remains to be seen how much he will profit by marching through the wild forests to Fort Edward and beyond. Unless he takes Albany his campaign fails."

"But surely he will take Albany!" she cried.

I shook my head.

"All these settlers ahead and behind, and hundreds of others in the north country have cared but little whether king or Americans won. Now even the most ardent Tories are enraged at the terrible dangers thrust upon their women and children by Burgoyne's Indians. Small profit to the king's army to win at Ticonderoga if it means the settlers are to lose their homes and perhaps their lives. The men who lived through the last few days between here and Argyle will level their guns against the Indians. But they can't be for the king and at the same time wipe out his red allies. Burgoyne would have fared better had he dispensed with the tomahawk and torch altogether. Not that he could win even then, but he would have fared better."

"It's a long walk to Albany. Let's not begin it by being partisan," she said with a sigh. "Suppose you tell me about your visit to New York. My distant kinsman, Ambrose Kerry, has written much about you. I'm afraid he's prejudiced; for he says some very terrible things."

She smiled in saying this, and straightway I gave her the story, just as things had happened, even to the killing of Wentsel. She was very sober and thoughtful when I finished. Her only comment was:

"I think you took more chances and risked something worse than you risked at the Colmwood house. Of course the tragedy was unavoidable."

She referred to Colonel Wentsel's death.

"Quite so when I found him trying to kill Betsy Osmond with a holster pistol, he having already done for Paul Bowen, who's rôle was exactly like that played by Kerry, a spy from the very beginning. Wentsel's fate will never keep me awake of nights."

"Oh, so much sadness and sorrow in this man-ruled world! Let's be friends if we can. Betsy Osmond often sings your praises."

"She is a wonderful little woman. Few could have played the part she did; go through what she did."

"She is my friend," she softly said. And never a word that Betsy Osmond was her maid. After a brief silence she said—

"I suppose you know that Fort Stanwix is invested?" I shook my head. She continued:

"Colonel Willet got through the lines and sent a message to Albany, showing how deplorable conditions are at the fort. Colonel Gansevoort must surrender, or Colonel St. Leger can not stop his Indians from ravaging the entire valley."

"He'll control them in event Gansevoort surrenders just as Burgoyne controls his. If I tell you what I think about St. Leger's Indians and the Johnsons I'm afraid you'll think me partisan."

"I was forgetting," she murmured. "I'll

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only say that all this trouble is man-made. Women never would order things so."

Never were twenty miles so short, so quickly covered. At times I induced her to ride in cart or carriage for a few miles, although she was well able to walk the whole distance. I remember nothing of the familiar landmarks. I only remember my sense of regret when the rare journey was finished and I left at the door of her house.

She told me I could call on the morrow, that Betsy Osmond would wish to hear my adventures at first hand. But the morrow must see me riding north to find our army and place myself at the further disposal of General Schuyler.

CHAPTER X

THE WHITE DAWN

THE army fell back. Burgoyne used two days in making Fort Anne. Two more days were required for him to camp within a mile of Fort Edward, a distance of about thirteen miles farther. We evacuated Edward and camped four miles from it. The mettle of our men was greatly improved. The shock of Ticonderoga's fall was losing its effect. We were rapidly reorganizing our minds and strengthening our spirits.

It was while we were slowly withdrawing toward Fort Miller that I returned from outpost work and was most agreeably surprized to find Will Bucks had returned from the south and that he had brought a message to me from Albany. The rifleman's presence did me a world of good. His first words after I had drawn him aside were:

"I fetched you a writing, but I don't 'low to carry any back. I'm here for the fighting."

The missive he produced from his hat proved to be from Betsy Osmond. The quaintly prim writing breathed her personality and effected me very agreeably. In part she wrote:

—So nothing must do but we three go up the Mohawk to the German Flatts where we shall wait until St. Leger advances and we shall be joined by Captain Betworth and Captain Kerry. Betworth is displeased at his assignment, as he had believed he would go to Philadelphia. Captain Kerry was well satisfied to serve with St. Leger so long as a certain fair lady was in Albany. It is believed here that the German Flatts are already held by St. Leger. I fear me Fort Stanwix is in a sad fix. They do say here that the whole stretch of the Mohawk will soon be swept by the Indians, and Mistress Audrey holds that we will be better off at the Flatts than in Albany. Madame Betworth would be mortally glad to return to New York if not for the wicked plague. She is in a bad state of health and excitement stirs her up wotully. Your well-wisher and friend-Betsy Osmond.

Let me add my regrets at not seeing you when in town. I thank you for your care of Mistress Audrey, who is ever the best and most beautiful of women.

"How came you by this?" I asked.

Bucks grinned sheepishly and confessed—"Sarge, not to put too sharp a point to it, I was hunting for a uncle who used to live in Albany."

"Hunting at kitchen doors, I'll warrant!"

"Ay, mayhap. Something like that. Anyway, a young person, who set me all of a twitter with her brown eyes, hailed me from the next house. She gave me some fine victuals and asked if I wasn't the feller who ate some johnny-cake at the Jersey farmhouse where we stopped the Betworth carriage. Then she asked if I didn't used to know you, and if I was going where you might be. When I 'lowed you'n me would meet up if you still wore your hair she made me wait while she writ that there writing. And that's about all."

"What do you think of three women going to the German Flatts?"

"Who goes along with 'em?"

"No one that I know of."

"They're plumb crazy."

"They believe they'll be perfectly safe. They expect to meet British army officers at the Flatts."

"St. Leger don't hold German Flatts; not by a long shot. His Injuns are prowling all over the country waiting for the fort to give in. If the women can pass inside St. Leger's lines they'll be safe 'less the Injuns find they can't win. If the Injuns larn that much then St. Leger himself won't be any too safe. That's the natur' of a Injun. He goes to raise a sculp. Finds he can't do it. No enemies to be caught. He don't give up, though. He 'lows a sculp is a sculp, and he lifts the hair of neutral, or friendly, and dances it, and makes his medicine strong."

He spoke as I had expected. I left him to see if my men had shaved, and filled their canteens, as the new day would begin when the sentry could see one thousand yards, and to save time the men were supposed to attend to their personal appearance and fill their canteens after sunset. Ordinarily brigades paraded at sunrise, ground arms

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and had their breakfast, struck their tents and were ready to march by eight or nine o'clock. But in those ticklish days, when at any hour we might have to run for it, or audaciously attack, the "General" was often beaten as early as two o'clock in the morning, and the "Troop" an hour later for us to fall in. As Bucks expressed it, the army was continually standing on tiptoe, ready to give ground or deliver an attack. A small group of soldiers were idling before my tent when I came up.

"How now?" I curtly said. "You've not shaved, nor powdered your hair, nor brushed your clothes."

"We'll be gittin' to all them things now you've come," gravely replied a veteran. "We felt we had to keep watch on that critter inside, but he's pulled the flap shut."

I threw back the flap and beheld my friend the Oneida. He was using my small mirror and had just finished painting his nose and chin white and the rest of his visage black. The bear on his breast had been freshly painted and was at his old task of breaking down a tree.

"My red brother!" I cried, greatly pleased to see him. On rejoining the army I had learned how he had reported Burgoyne's slow progress and then disappeared. Doubtless he had returned to the forest, a lone wolf bent on making a kill. I closed the tent opening and grasped his hand. If his face reflected any pleasurable emotion the paint concealed it, and yet I knew he came to find me. He replaced his brushes of pounded bark and the paints in their bag and then held up four hanks of coarse hair. Touching each he proudly informed—

"Sac, Sioux, French Mohawk, Chippewa."

"The Oneida chief hunts alone because he kills them all," I puffed his vanity by praising. "Now he paints for a new war-path."

"He goes to talk to his people on the Mohawk. The Oneidas hold hard to the chain of friendship binding them to the Thirteen Fires, but some feel their hands slipping."

This was serious news. Stripped of its imagery he was telling me that the Oneidas were weakening in their friendly attitude toward the Americans and were in danger of allying themselves with the other members of the Long House.

"The people of the Tree Breaker would never receive a black belt from Seneca, Cayuga, or Mohawk," I protested. I omitted the Onondaga, who, although in sympathy with the British, were not so quick to lift the red ax against us.

"The men of the Oneida nation hear strange sounds. They see strange things. They hear that their Uncles (Mohawks) and the Keepers of the Western Door are thick in the valley and will eat them up. They see white men along the Mohawk trying to send peace belts to St. Leger. Their hearts are heavy. The Tree Breaker carries a talk to them. He will tell them evil birds whisper lies in their ears, that they are to be stout of heart. He will tell them how he has been called *Royaña* by their enemies. He will make their tired hands grow strong around the chain again."

He was planning a most valuable military service and one that General Schuyler would warmly indorse. I bethought me to say—

"White women go to the German Flatts from Albany."

"The white women's *orenda* has lost his eyes, or is asleep," he grunted.

"Their men folks fight with St. Leger. So they will be safe."

"The McCrea women was killed by Burgoyne's Indians and scalped. The Indians knew she was the woman of a king's man."*

"Joseph Brant leads the Indians. He will protect the women."

"Thayendanegea of the Mohawks is a brave man. The women will be safe while within reach of his shadow. But he has only two feet, two eyes, two ears. There are many Indians with St. Leger who do the thing that seems good to them, and Thayendanegea is not always near to stop them."

"Then you think the white women may be hurt?"

He restored the four scalps to his girdle and examined his painted face critically in the little mirror. Then in his indirect way of answering a question he said:

"Let my white brother catch and tame a hawk. Put in the same cage a little singing-bird. Let my brother stand with a stick and strike the hawk when it would harm

* Miss Jane McCrea, fiancée of a subordinate officer with Burgoyne. She lived at the village of Fort Edward and went to join her lover and become his bride under the protection of an Indian escort sent by him. She and her escort halted at a spring half a mile from her home and were met by a second band of Indians sent by the impatient lover. The two bands quarreled and killed the woman. Gates used the murder in charging Burgoyne with encouraging such acts.

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the bird. Then let him walk away for a little. Then let him come back to the cage. There is the hawk. There are soft feathers in the bottom of the cage."

That decided me.

I HAD no notion of running into Tory company and facing the ill-will of Captains Betworth and Kerry; but I did propose to spy on the women, to satisfy myself they were in no danger, and, if possible, to convey something of my fears to Betsy Osmond, who in turn would tell her mistress. With the three on their guard and remaining close to Fort Dayton they should be safe until St. Leger took over the place, or was driven back by an American force.

To penetrate far up the valley was not particularly hazardous, although the investment of Fort Stanwix had thrown the whole countryside into a turmoil of fear. With the Oneida to improve my woodcraft I would have wagered I could make Onondaga, where the great council fire was kept burning, and return alive; or even Oquaga, "the place of wild grapes," down on the east branch of the Susquehanna, where Joseph Brant had mustered in his red forces before joining St. Leger at Oswego.

"My red brother needs eyes to watch while he sleeps. His white brother will go with him up the Mohawk," I said.

His eyes twinkled, but his voice was very grave as he said—

"It is good."

I gained an audience of a few minutes with General Schuyler. He was interested in my request and readily consented to my going. The Oneida's errand he declared to be of much importance.

"I'll give you a letter to Colonel Gansevoort," he said. And straightway he wrote a few lines to the defender of Fort Stanwix.

"We're about to fall back again. The Oneida should lose no time. With the Senecas and Mohawks burning the Oneida towns and pushing them down the river it's natural they should fear extermination should St. Leger capture the fort. They're between the devil and the pit. Tell General Herkimer I say for him to make every effort to reenforce Gansevoort. I've written Gansevoort that Arnold shall be sent to his aid. Tell Herkimer that fact. It may help him to secure recruits. Better take a white man with you. Good luck to you."

Before I could depart an Oneida runner was shown in and General Schuyler asked me to stay and interpret. The man's news, briefly stated, was to the effect that St. Leger in person was within a day's march of Stanwix. His entire force as estimated by the runner was fifteen hundred, eight hundred of these being Indians. There was no particular value in this information as we had kown for weeks that the fort was invested by Indians and a small advance force of St. Leger's white fighters.

The fellow's description of conditions at the fort was of interest. The place was so closely invested, he declared, that the soldiers would not venture outside the walls except in large numbers. He gave the details of several horrible murders committed on settlers within sight of the fort. His description of St. Leger's order of march showed that the invaders were in fear of being attacked at any moment. This was a state of mind we were glad to have them in.

Finishing with the Indian I went to find my white companion. Of course my choice was Bucks. When I explained the mission and told him he was free to refuse he hesitated between friendship and his desire to participate in the big events which we all knew were almost upon us. Friendship won; and never did a man have a truer companion. The Tree Breaker, however, did not fancy the rifleman's company. He said we were too many for scouting and too few for fighting. I changed his prejudice, however, by saying Bucks was fresh from the Cherokee country, where he had learned much medicine from the *shamans*.

We could not get horses for the trip, but the Tree Breaker procured a Mohawk birch canoe from Van Schaick's island, and in this the three of us sped up the river. We passed by Schenectady and Fort Johnson, by deserted Onekagoncka on the left bank, and the Lower Mohawk Castle, a short distance down Schoharie Creek. Beautiful Guy Park was empty of life and the pretentious mansion of stone was deserted. But there were fugitives ever straggling down the valley, afoot and mounted, or in bateaux and canoes; and all were seeking safety in Albany. Those whom we could induce to pause and talk all told the same story; the valley was doomed.

Men of high station and great influence were openly seeking an advantageous alliance with the invaders. The fall of Fort

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Stanwix and the extermination of its stubborn garrison was but a matter of hours. Lieutenant Colonel Mellon's relief force of two hundred men and two batteaux of provisions was two days ahead of us. None of the fleeing settlers believed he could break through the cordon of red men and gain the fort.

At Stone Arabia the Oneida went ashore and had a talk with twenty Oneida Indians and incidentally learned that three white women had passed up the river some days before and had had trouble in inducing their boatmen to continue the journey. At the little settlement of Canajoharie we heard of them again, and once more their boatmen were afraid to proceed farther and had to be bribed.

These encounters with dispirited settlers demonstrated that had there been fewer manorial grants of huge acreage the woodsmen and pioneers would have pressed up the valley in greater numbers, despite the activity of the Long House to discourage the trespass, and in this evil day would be blocking St. Leger's path.

Through scenes of disorder and great unrest we made our way to the German Flatts, arriving on the afternoon of August fifth. One piece of good news greeted us when we went ashore. The Mellon relief force had won through into the fort. Down the river I was told by a hunter that Nicholas Herkimer was to be found at Fort Dayton enrolling the militia, proposing to march to the relief of Stanwix. I repaired to the fort, but was too late to deliver General Schuyler's verbal message. It was just as well, however, as the general with seven hundred men had marched the day before and must now be well advanced on their journey to raise the siege.

Rejoining my companions at the river I knew they had heard the news, for Bucks was counting his bullet patches of linen and examining his bullets to reject any that were imperfect. The Oneida was behind some bushes, making his body shiny with oil and his face freshly hideous with paint.

"If we hurry, sarge, we can catch up with 'em," said Bucks eagerly, after I had told of my failure to find Herkimer. "Every one round here 'lows there's going to be a screaming big fight. Some of the Injun's red friends give him the tidin's but he won't talk to me."

"First we must find the women and make sure they're safely located," I discouraged him by replying. "They came here. They must be on some of the outlying farms."

"The white women go to find their men," spoke up the Oneida. "They had no roadbelts, but my people did not turn them back. They went on horses two days before the old white chief (Herkimer) took the path."

"Consarn his ugly picter! Why couldn't he 'a' told me that!" disgustedly complained Bucks.

The Oneidas as a nation did better service for the American cause by remaining neutral than they could have done had they been actively partisan. They mixed with the hostile Indians and brought valuable information into our lines. Several of their ancient towns had been burned by their former brothers in the Long House, and yet Seneca and Mohawk were nursing the hope they would change their hearts and accept a black belt from Guy Johnson.

For this reason alone the hostile Iroquois had not started to exterminate them as yet; and they stole back and forth, observing, remembering, and repeating to our officers. Therefore I had no reason to doubt the Tree Breaker's information although he had barely moved from the river bank during my absence to find Herkimer.

"They were going to St. Leger's camp?" I asked, an awful horror filling my soul.

"There will be a big fight," replied the Oneida. "Johnson's Royal Greens have stripped and painted and will fight as Indians. The men in the fort will run out and knock off some heads. There will be fighting in St. Leger's camp. It is not a good place for white women. A man rode with them to show them the way. He is a king's man and they should be in the camp by this time."

Supreme in their confidence that his Majesty's arms must win, and being entirely ignorant of Indian nature, the Betworth women had set forth for St. Leger's mixed army. Owing to the stress of the times, the fears and confusion of the people, there had been none with sufficient firmness to prevent their going. Had General Herkimer known of their rash purpose he would have detained them. Whatever doubts Betsy Osmond may have entertained would be overcome by her love for her mistress.

We lost some time in procuring horses. Those settlers who remained on their farms

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would not part with their animals until assured there would be no need to flee. Then again we had only the dubious continental currency to offer in exchange. At the best we could get but two sorry nags, the owner being a stout American. He refused our currency, however.

The Oneida preferred to travel afoot. Two miles from the Flatts Bucks dismounted in disgust, permitting his lame animal to find its way back home. Within a very short distance I followed the rifleman's example. The weather was lowery and threatening rain, and the dusk came early. The woods were oppressive and breathed the hostility of the Iroquois.

We took a northerly course so as to skirt the Indians besieging the fort. My plan, only half formed, was to keep outside the hostile circle and trust to the Oneida to penetrate to St. Leger's camp and learn if the women were there. If the Tree Breaker were unable to obtain first-hand information he could learn the truth from some of the men of his tribe. Bucks was for stealing through the lines and gaining the fort with the Oneida reporting to us there. The Oneida, while eager to undertake the dangerous scout, was unwilling to enter the fort. I began to fear that his lust for making a kill would interfere with our success.

The increasing darkness forced us to make a camp when within seven or eight miles of the fort. Straggling bands of savages frequently passed through the woods near our hidden position. These men had been carrying on bush warfare with the outlying farms for nearly two months, and their isolated murders had helped to stifle endeavor and blanket the whole valley with fear.

Grass grew ripe and spoiled for want of cutting. Cattle strayed and were not recovered except as some red butcher found them. Orchards were heavy with fruit, and few would be the harvest hands to relieve the branches. We made a dark camp, eating the cooked meat we had brought with us. The Oneida was restless. Each time we heard a small party of savages making back to their camps near the fort I had all I could do to keep him from stalking them.

I managed to restrain him until near daybreak, when he suddenly rolled into the bushes and was gone. Bucks and I ate more of the meat and kept snug. With the first light more prowling bands of Indians began passing through the woods toward the fort. Many of these were Senecas and Mohawks of the Long House. Some passed within sight of our hiding place. They were returning from night raids and I saw three scalps carried by one band. They were making fast time as though keeping some definite appointment.

Bucks noticed this much and remarked:

"Something big's on! Scouts was sent out to round 'em up. They're hurrying back to git their paws into the mess."

I WAS suddenly swamped by the fear that Fort Stanwix already had fallen. I calmed myself by remembering the fort had cannon and would not be taken before these were fired. There had been no sound of heavy guns. The hours filed by and I fretted and fumed at the non-appearance of the Oneida.

Bucks was equally impatient and declared the Indian had been killed and that we should be moving on. It was not until five hours after sunrise that the Tree Breaker rejoined us. His deep breathing bespoke fast travel. I gave him some meat which he "wolfed" in a famished fashion. After he had eaten we sat in silence for several minutes. When he was ready to speak:

"The old white chief's men act like young boys. Johnson's white Indians and Thayendanegea's red Indians are like thin wolves running after fat cattle."

"They've licked Herkimer?" faltered Bucks.

"What of the white women?" was my query.

He disliked to be questioned in this direct manner, but for once he waived our lack of etiquette and answered:

"The old white chief will have to fight before the sun gets overhead. The white women are in St. Leger's camp. An Oneida of the Bear told me. A few Oneidas are with the old white chief."

Immensely relieved to know the women were through the lines I said—

"We will go and fight by the side of the white chief."

"A good talk, sarge," said Bucks. "Our rifles ain't to be sneezed at. Always did want to show 'em Dutch farmers how to kill Injuns."

"The wind talks!" harshly announced the Oneida, springing erect.

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A sullen rumbling was borne to us on the breeze, and yet it was not thunder. It ceased and then repeated.

"Musket fire in volleys!" whispered Bucks.

The Oneida sniffed at the hot August air and played with his war-ax.

"How far away?" I asked.

"Oriskany creek," he mumbled. "The ax will be stuck in all the old chief's heads before we can get there."

We quit our hiding place and made toward the firing, which continued. Because of the fear of being surprized by some belated band returning to the creek we moved with stealth and therefore slowly. The firing kept up for nearly an hour, and we were near enough to catch the faint sounds of yells and war-cries when all became hushed. In dismay I stared at Bucks and he at me.

The Oneida held out his hand and caught a raindrop and pointed to the overcast sky. We shielded our priming pans and continued our advance. If the fight was over we should be encountering survivors in mad flight, or hearing the crashing *feu-de-joi* of many guns, or the triumphant scalp-yells of the savages.

"Rain come heavy. Fight stops," grunted the Oneida.

The storm made nasty work of traveling. The low-hanging clouds gushed water. Our priming must be kept dry at all costs. The vegetation was soaked. We were wet to the hide from passing through the bushes. Even the Oneida's fiery ardor was somewhat quenched. For an hour it rained, then the clouds broke apart. Very soon the firing of many guns was to be heard.

"Another battle!" muttered Bucks.

The Oneida brandished his ax and cried:

"Big fight. Rain come. Men stop fighting. Rain stop. Men begin fighting. Old white chief's men not dead, not running away."

The battle was being waged most stubbornly. From the sound of the guns and the yelling it was plain that neither side was giving ground. We doubled our pace and broke through the woods near the creek in time to see a double file of men running along the bank. I saw their American hats and shouted loudly, for they must be reenforcements from the fort to attack the enemy in the rear. Some of the hindmost turned and on beholding us came to a halt.

"Go on! Go on!" I yelled. "We're American soldiers on special duty. We'll join you." And I commenced running toward them. The Oneida drew up abreast of me and hurled me into the bushes. Before I could express my indignation Bucks threw up his long rifle and fired, and one of them crumpled to the ground.

"Good heavens! You shoot American soldiers!" I screamed, leaping to my feet.

"Green coats! No good!" yelled the Oneida. And of the three arrows he released one passed through a man's neck. Not until this man fell, clawing at his throat, did I observe that under their American hunting shirts they were wearing the coats of Johnson's Royal Greens. We ran into the woods, and if any started to pursue us they soon turned back to try their luck at bagging bigger game.

It was plain we had hit the creek above the fighting and were between St. Leger's force and the fort. We dived deeper into the woods and ran for the fort. There were three miles to cover and we had made two thirds the distance when heavy firing broke out directly ahead of us. St. Leger did not have enough men to block Herkimer's advance and at the same time to assault the fort. This left but one explanation. Ganse-voort was attempting to aid Herkimer by making a sortie on the enemy's camp near the fort, thereby hoping to recall some of the men from the creek.

The Oneida disliked being between two fires and withdrew to the north. Bucks and I followed him for a short distance and then turned toward the fort. The Indian followed us reluctantly until the firing near the fort ceased. We came to the end of the timber in time to look across the cultivated meadow and behold seven carts, heavily loaded, being drawn into the fort.

"Fort made a sortie, busted in St. Leger's camp and the Injun camp just beyond it. See! They've driv the critters, red and white, into the woods and sacked off all their belongings!" exulted Bucks. "Let's git to the fort!"

This would have been our next move had not the Oneida explosively exclaimed—"White women!"

A woman was standing in the opening of a tent. Although the distance was considerable there was no mistaking the graceful poise of the slight figure. She was Betsy Osmond. The woman now appearing

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behind her was Audrey Betworth. Madame Betworth did not show herself. My impulse was to run to them, with cold reason warning me not to thrust myself into the power of the enemy. Betworth and Kerry had the whole strength of St. Leger's army to protect their women, but I did not believe the army could save us from torture if we were taken.

"Let's bust and run for the fort!" impatiently urged Bucks.

"That's where we belong. The women are safe," I agreed. We turned and were about to dash across the cleared ground when a low cry from Bucks brought me to a halt. A cloud of Indians were running from the woods, coming from the direction of Oriskany creek and making for the encampment so recently raided by Gansevoort's men. The Oneida's thin lips curled in satisfaction as he beheld them, and he said:

"Colonel Butler's Senecas and Thayendanegea's Mohawks! They come for more powder and arrows. Their camp is spoiled. They got too much fighting at the creek."

The savages yelled like fiends on finding their supplies removed or destroyed. They had been out in the rain, fighting in their shirts or breech-clouts and could not now find a blanket.

"Oh, good Lord! Not that!" groaned Bucks.

This time it was the women. Taking fright at the appearance of the Indians Madame Betworth had started to run toward the woods to the west of the camp. Her daughter followed her. Betsy Osmond ran like a boy, her clear voice rising above the babel of sounds. I could not understand what she said, but I knew she was begging Madame Betworth to turn back to them. Because of her terror madame forgot the handicaps of age and ran exceedingly well.

"They're asking the Injuns to kill 'em!" cried Bucks.

"They bring in their dead. They say the old white chief's men counted many coups!" rejoiced the Oneida, referring to the litters now appearing, a dead or wounded warrior on each.

But if there were dead Indians also there were white prisoners; and I saw two of them done to death most brutally almost in the midst of the Tryon county Tories, who did not, so far as I could observe, raise a hand to prevent the murders. This dreadful violence was observed by the three women.

Madame Betworth, who had been induced to halt and probably was on the point of returning to her tent, wrenched free from her daughter's grasp and resumed her flight. Nor did the younger women seek to persuade her to return but ran beside her, one on each side to help her along. Other eyes had witnessed the women's fear and half a dozen Senecas started after them.

"Merciful God! The red devils is out of control! They'll kill the women!" howled Bucks.

WE RAN like rabbits along the edge of the cover, passing through a deserted camp which I afterward learned belonged to the Tories. Next we skirted a large Indian camp near the Scalping Tree. This, too, was empty. Then we entered a cedar swamp. If our path had been considerably longer than that followed by the women and their pursuers our speed was much greater.

Sure of overtaking the women and perhaps not yet worked up to the pitch of murdering them, because they were under the protection of a British officer and lived at headquarters, the Senecas purposely lost time in leaping about and brandishing their axes. I believe that could the women have turned about and courageously faced the Indians they would not have been offered any harm.

There was an Indian camp at the northwest end of the swamp where we entered over a faint trail. There was another to the west and two to the south, the most easterly of the latter being between the swamp and the cleared ground across which the women had fled. None of these camps was occupied as all the warriors were at Oriskany creek, or had been dispersed by the sortie from the fort. Thus we entered the cedars unobserved. The trail crossed the tract in a southeasterly direction and ended at the cleared ground.

It was not until we were committed to the swamp that we realized our serious predicament. Could we remain concealed until nightfall we could enter the hard growth and follow along its edge to where it was cut by the Albany road. From that point a swift dash should take us to the southern horn-work of the fort. But our concealment pivoted upon the movements

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of the women. Did they turn back before the savages reached an ungovernable point we would have our chance. We pressed on to sight them, and the groans and screams of prisoners being tortured and killed formed a background that contained but little hope.

The Oneida was beside himself. He darted down the treacherous path and I had all I could do to catch up with him and halt him before he plunged into full view of those in the cleared ground.

"The Bear should be cunning if he would break down more trees," I remonstrated. "See! the women are not afraid. The Senecas will not harm them. They know they are the women of the big white chiefs."

I believed this when I spoke, for Audrey Betworth had halted her mother. Madame Betworth was panting heavily, and either from physical weakness, or a dread of the narrow swamp opening seemed content to turn back. The Indians, not pressing too close, were dancing up and down and waving their weapons, but more in ferocious play than from an intent to kill. With their quarry over their fright the game had lost its savor.

There were prisoners to be tormented. They were on the point of turning back to the camp when one of Herkimer's soldiers, severly wounded, suddenly broke away from three of the Royal Greens and ran down the Albany road. Immediately a Seneca ceased his grotesque dancing before the women and sped like a panther after the unfortunate man. When within ten feet of the fleeing soldier the naked pursuer hurled himself forward and the two went down, the soldier on his face. His murderer had his scalp off almost instantly. Leaping to his feet he sounded his scalp-cry and danced back toward the women, waving his gruesome trophy and shouting like a demon.

"I feel sick," gasped Bucks.

Madame Betworth screamed in mortal terror and ran into the mouth of the path and collapsed. Audrey Betworth sped after her, closely followed by Betsy Osmond. With yells and whoops the savages crowded into the trail. Both girls wheeled and Betsy Osmond ordered them to turn back.

They halted, undecided, but the savage who had killed the prisoner was held by the blood-lust and began edging forward, his scalping knife still showing red, his small black eyes aflame with —— fires as they rested on the prostrate woman.

"Go back! Go back!" screamed Audrey Betworth, standing beside Betsy Osmond to block his path.

The whole pack pressed closer and yelled in the Seneca tongue for the fellow to "bring out the hair." Audrey Betworth dropped beside her mother and tried to arouse her. Betsy Osmond confronted the savages alone, the man with the knife approaching very slowly.

With a wild cry Mistress Audrey staggered to her feet and tossed her arms and shrieked—

"Oh, she's dead! She's dead!"

The savage understood and the words caused him to spring forward and hurl Betsy Osmond to one side of the trail and her mistress to the other and to pounce upon the dead woman.

The explosion of Bucks' rifle was so close to my ear as to deafen me for a minute. The savage kicked and rolled over, still gripping his knife. Before the others could definitely locate the source of the shot the Oneida leaped down the path and scalped the dead warrior and rejoined us. Our presence was no longer a secret. The Indians yelped in astonishment and gave ground, then charged up the path. The two women would not leave Madame Betworth. One of the warriors seized Betsy Osmond and swung his ax. At the risk of hitting her I shot him with my rifle. Audrey Betworth squirmed away from the Indian who tried to grasp her shoulder. Then the Oneida and Bucks with loud yells charged forward and the Indians gave ground, not knowing what trap the place contained.

"Run up the trail!" I ordered the horrified women as I knelt beside Madame Betworth.

"She's dead! Her heart was very weak," moaned the daughter.

Madame Betworth died from the shock of witnessing the soldier's brutal death."

"She died painlessly," I said. "Run back. We'll bring her along."

"You'll not—you'll not let them?" she sobbed. And I feared that her heart would break as she stood there clawing at her throat.

"No! No! Take her up the trail, Betsy."

Then I nodded to Bucks and we picked up the unfortunate woman and commenced carrying her into the swamp, all the time urging the women to hasten ahead.

But the savages had recovered from their panic, and if they possessed any rage not

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loosed by the fight at the creek it was given free play now they realized that two of their number had been killed before their eyes and within the confines of the camp. A stentorian voice cried:

"Dig them out! Do you wait for your squaws to do the work?"

It was useless to try to run away while hampered by the lifeless body. On rounding a bend in the trail I backed into the thicket and placed the dead women on a hummock. The two women followed us and Bucks pushed them behind the hummock. I gave them my two Highland pistols and tossed my rifle to Bucks and drew my ax. The Oneida and I must stand them off until the rifleman had reloaded the empty weapons.

We heard them coming, hooting and screaming. When they turned the bend they were in single file, peering to right and left to locate us. The first fellow to discover our hiding place was seized by the Oneida, who grunted heavily and broke the red neck.

I would have spared the two women the sight but the Oneida was blood-mad, and he took his scalp and threw the limp body back into the trail, and capped his coup by sounding the scalp-cry of his nation. Then he began shooting his arrows, and while they lasted he kept the trail clear to the bend.

"All loaded," said Bucks. A sharp cry from Betsy Osmond sent him spinning about in time to behold a savage making for the women from the rear. The rifleman's lead sent this intruder plunging into a slough of muddy water, where he remained. He fell to work loading his rifle and I stepped to the edge of the trail with my rifle just as the Oneida shot his last arrow! One Indian was dead from the arrows and I knew there must be others sorely wounded.

But this mode of warfare could not continue. Every minute was adding to the number of our assailants, and from what I observed of them that day I know they did not feel they were conquerors at the creek fight. Some have said and written that Oriskany was the enemy's victory; but ask the Mohawks, who dispersed and fled. Or ask the Senecas who lost thirty-six men. The Indians, firing from ambush prematurely, bore the brunt of the fighting, yet the Royal Greens did not escape scathless that day. And it was St. Leger's force that withdrew from the field and the American force that remained and collected the dead and wounded.

The painted fighters returning from the creek were in a terrible temper when they learned of our audacity and lost no time in plunging into the swamp. The war-cry of the Oneida added to their wrath. To tantalize them the more the Tree-Breaker improvised a song in which he recounted his various coups and designated his victims as being old women, fit only for growing corn and beans. It was while threatening to cut a stout stick and whip the Senecas to their camp that the red tide surged irresistibly upon us.

Although it might seem that Bucks could have loaded his gun in the space it takes me to tell this, as a matter of fact he had barely made a beginning when I called on him to stand by me with ax and knife. The first of the warriors attempted to dash by our position so as to attack us on our right. Others left the trail before reaching us, to take us on our left. Above the din one voice kept screaming:

"Take the white woman's hair. It is white. It is good medicine."

I fired my one shot and could not miss, so closely were they massed. I drove the butt into a man's face and spoiled him for further fighting although not killing him. The Oneida struck twice with his ax, and then hurled it and stilled the voice that clamored for Madame Betworth's scalp. Bucks went down in the grasp of a brawny warrior, and the two rolled over behind me as I clubbed my gun until only the barrel was left. I did not know how the fight behind me resulted until Bucks crawled to my side, his face streaming blood. I had been cut about both arms and in the chest, but if I felt the wounds they only stung me on to greater efforts.

There was no keeping track of my red friend's achievements, but when his voice began failing him I did snatch a moment to take notice. He had been wounded a dozen times and a skilful cast of a knife had lodged the blade in his shoulder close to the base of the neck.

Catching my eye he straightened his powerful figure and with a sudden accession of strength sent his voice ringing loud and clear once more.

"Ho! Ho!" he cried. "They say a very

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brave man will show the snarling Seneca dogs how to die. Ho! Ho! They say one of the Bear people, who is called *Royana* will die very brave. They say he went into La Corne's camp and stole a white man from the stake. Ho! Ho! Let the Senecas send for Thayendanegea, so he may see how a brave man dies, so he can learn how to fight. They say the Tree Breaker of the Bear People of the Oneidas is taking many weak-hearted Senecas and Mohawks along with him to light his pipe and cook his game and tend his fires in the spirit land. Ho! Ho! Let the young men watch the Elder Brother die so they may know how to die like men."

And as he sang he fought and he was nearly bled white. Gathering himself for one supreme effort he shouted his war-cry and hurled himself against the mass of savages, catching the knife points in his powerful chest and driving his own blade through a brawny throat.

"*Royana.*" he loudly yelled.

It was his epitaph. He would never fight again.

Bucks rolled between my feet, clouted over the head by a war-club. I tried to stand astride of him but the odds were too much to be longer endured. I heard a Highland pistol crack behind me and a savage fell against me, causing me to lose my balance. Before I could recover the flat of an ax glanced against my head and I joined Bucks in oblivion.

WHEN I recovered consciousness I was in the cleared ground, surrounded by British soldiers and officers. A woman was passionately declaring—

"Unless you save them I will kill myself."

I opened my eyes. Betsy Osmond was standing near by, a knife gripped in her hand. Bucks was sitting up, his head covered with blood. Captain Betworth and his sister were kneeling beside their mother, stroking the gray hair the Indians could not secure. Outside the circle the Senecas were crouching, ready for a rush.

"Thank God, here comes Joseph Brant!" cried a well known voice; and although the speaker stood with his back to me I recognized him as Ambrose Kerry, or Captain Sant, as he was known in the American army. There was a stir among the Senecas and Thayendanegea, called the "Captain of the Six Nations" by his English friends, confronted the white men.

A Seneca shouted something. Thayendanegea replied:

"You want his scalp? But who killed him? A dozen killed him. Can a dozen scalp him? He was a very brave man. He taught you how to die. Those who were once his brothers in the Long House will not want his scalp. It will make your *orenda* turn against you. He died to save the mother of an English brother from being scalped. If you want scalps go to the Oriskany. There are white men there. Thayendanegea has spoken."

Somewhat to my surprize the Senecas did not insist very strongly on lifting the Tree Breaker's scalp-lock. Although they had no affection for an Oneida, the heroism of his death had made a profound impression upon them. As Thayendanegea ceased speaking a dozen or more of his Mohawks glided to his side.

Colonel John Butler now came up, his blood still hot over the losses inflicted on his rangers. Having been informed of the nature of the dispute he harshly cried out—

"Joseph Brant, this is too much fuss to make over that dead dog."

"He fought to save the women of your brother officer," coldly replied Thayendanegea. "I have said he shall not be scalped."

"Colonel Butler, if you have any charge over those Indians I will hold you responsible for my mother's death," spoke up Audrey Betworth, while her brother's face was a death-mask as he swung his head and attempted to catch Butler's eye.

"The Senecas meant her no harm," sullenly replied Butler, yet bowing low before the famous beauty. "This was no place for her here. They tell me she died from excitement."

"She died of fear," snarled Betworth. "Then they followed her into the swamp to mutilate her. If not for these two riflemen belonging to the American army, and the dead Oneida, they would have scalped her. God knows what would have been the fate of my sister and her maid! Even now your —— followers encircle us, yammering for more victims."

"They are not my Indians, sir," haughtily replied Butler. "They belong to General St. Leger. Address yourself to him if you resent their presence."

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Before this phase of the scene could develop further Captain Kerry spoke up, his voice calm and decisive. He said:

"Captain Brant has ruled on the dead Oneida. We Englishmen rule on the two white men. They are prisoners because they tried to save my friend's women folks. They were not even at the Oriskany fight. They shall not be harmed so long as there is one Englishman to defend them."

"That high and mighty tone is not to be used in addressing a colonel in his Majesty's service, sir!" angrily replied Butler. "I am an Englishman. I appreciate the service they have done for English women. I have not advocated their death. But I do tell you that even General St. Leger can not save them unless you get them under cover and put a guard over them. I will do my best to have the Senecas withdraw."

"Very good. We will take them to camp," said Kerry.

"Say, folks, I can walk," groaned Bucks.

"Let the ladies be removed first," I suggested.

Until I spoke they had supposed me to be unconscious. Betsy Osmond kneeled at my side and pillowed my head on her arm and stared earnestly into my eyes, and murmured—

"Feel badly, lad?"

"I'm much better now," I told her. She rose and quietly announced—

"I go when these two men go."

Colonel Butler's gaze was worried as he surveyed the sullen Indians. He rapidly advised:

"If they're to be kept from the ax it must be done at once. They have been at the rum. When I finish talking to them let Captain Brant's Mohawks pick them up. Let two of the officers make a litter of guns and a blanket and carry Madame Betworth. Hurry them to the tent behind General St. Leger's. If the Senecas get out of control we'll all be fighting for our lives."

"My Mohawks can be trusted," said Thayendanegea curtly.

Colonel Butler wheeled on the Indians and passionately addressed them. He talked so fast I could only catch bits of what he said, but he began upbraiding them for frightening a white chief's mother to death. He lashed them fiercely with his sharp words and had them inclined to give ground to escape from his abuse. In English he ordered:

"Take them away. I'll bring up the rear."

Thayendanegea gave an order and six Mohawks slipped inside the white circle.

"I can walk," I said to Thayendanegea.

"You two will stand a better chance of reaching the camp alive if you are carried," he advised. The Mohawks first picked up the Oneida. Thayendanegea stared into the impassive face for a moment, then lifted his ax in homage to the brave dead, and I heard him for a final tribute say, "*Royanal*"

A warrior caught me up by the heels and another supported my head and shoulders. Betsy Osmond walked beside me, her hand in mine. It was a sad, strange procession. Betworth and Kerry went first with the body of Madame Betworth, Mistress Audrey walking beside the litter. Those Mohawks who were not acting as stretcher-bearers filed along on both sides of us. Colonel Butler brought up the rear and continually harangued the Senecas. In this fashion we were carried to Captain Sant's tent, close by St. Leger's.

After half an hour Colonel Butler came in and said:

"I have helped you because of the women. But very soon I may be in danger myself. I can do no more. General St. Leger fears it will excite the Indians if he comes here. He wishes me to express his gratitude for what you have done today. You are free to go whenever it is safe for you to go."

He left us and soon thereafter Thayendanegea came in.

"More rum is given the Senecas. My own Mohawks are growing excited. You must try to get to the fort after night begins. You shall put on English hats and carry muskets and walk slowly at first. You will promise to throw the guns away before entering the fort."

We gladly agreed to make the attempt and promised not to take the guns into the fort. He departed to watch his Mohawks. More than once had this man saved prisoners from death, and always was he opposed to torture. None on the battle-field could shout the battle-cry so loudly as he. None was more famous for bravery and sagacity between the Ohio and St. Lawrence. Superb warrior and strategist that he was he possessed what is most rare in an Indian, magnanimity toward whites.

The flaps of the tent were kept closed. For several hours our lives hung on the bold

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bearing of our guards. At times the Indians seemed bent on rushing the tent, but each time they were turned back by Thayendanegea or Butler. It was dusk when Thayendanegea hurriedly entered the tent and dropped two muskets, two coats and two hats, and ordered:

"Make ready. St. Leger is talking to the Indians to hold them in bounds. He must give them more rum, or fight them. He will be very slow in measuring out the rum. If you're here after they've finished drinking I think you will be killed."

"We are ready now, Thayendanegea," said Bucks, and he slipped on an English coat and hat and picked up a musket. I followed his example. Captain Betworth came to the tent and handed me a white flag, saying:

"I hope it's not too dark for them to see it. I shall always be in debt for what you have done for me and my sister. She speaks the same words to you. Her maid asks me to add her best wishes. Their coming here was a horrible mistake. Good-by."

He took my hand and gripped it fiercely and did the same by Bucks.

Thayendanegea said:

"Now is the time. Walk slowly. You have been brave men. You will make a good fight in the fort and will die bravely. You shall not be scalped if I can help it."

"Will the two white women be safe here?" I anxiously asked.

"They will be safe. But they shall be sent down to Albany at the first opportunity." He shook us each by the hand, and with muskets shouldered we strolled around the bend of the river and toward the fort. The Senecas had consumed their rations of rum and were screaming like madmen. My feet itched to run, but Bucks warned:

"Wait! Their —— eyes will see us if we run. Then they'll know we're not soldiers. And we ain't up to our best foot-work after that scrimmage in the swamp. Slow and easy wins this race."

I did not dare display the flag, as it would betray us to the savages. It resulted that several shots were fired at us from the fort. The gun fire attracted the attention of the Indians, and they were curious to learn why two English soldiers should so boldly march on the enemy.

"Possum a-roasting! They're streaming after us!" muttered Bucks.

I dropped the gun and raised the white flag and we commenced running. I quickly learned that the fight had left me weak and dizzy. My legs were unsteady and I could not attain anything like my usual speed. Bucks was in better condition and had to hold back to keep abreast of me. The sight of the flag, the fact there were only two of us stilled the guns in the fort. Yet the defenders suspected a trick, for the savages were now coming in a body.

"Go ahead and explain," I panted to Bucks.

Bucks picked up his heels and ran most desperately, yelling at the top of his voice for them to let us in and to fire on the Indians.

I tottered along the best I could. A cool voice from the fort drawled out— "But who are you, anyway?"

"American riflemen! Why'n sin don't you pot them Injuns?" howled Bucks.

Rifles and musket began a crackling fire. Bucks yelled to me:

"Injuns took to cover. They don't want no more fight. Take it easy."

And I needed his assistance to enter the fort. We were taken before Colonel Ganse-voort and told our story.

ST. LEGER never sighted the mouth of the Mohawk and in retreating to Canada was in grave danger from his own Indians. Sir Henry Clinton's move to reenforce Burgoyne was spiritless and doomed to failure.

With every express bringing disheartening news Burgoyne lost the incisiveness which characterized the first half of his campaign and seemed to absorb some of the lethargic qualities of his Hessians. Instead of Fraser with his light infantry he sent dismounted German dragoons into the New Hampshire Grants, and they marched less than two miles an hour and were thoroughly whipped at Bennington so that Molly Stark might not be a widow. With opportunities for looting scarce and with American riflemen eliminating easy scalps St. Luc and his red force withdrew to vanish into the Canadian forest.

Then came the battle of Freeman Farm, forerunner of the white dawn.

The surrender at Saratoga closed the campaign which had opened so favorably for Carleton's successor—and the war was won. Yes; when the enemy stacked his

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guns and left his artillery in the ruins of old Fort Hardy we had reached the day that France had waited for. In less than three months after the climax at Saratoga our independence was recognized by the French court. For the first time we were acknowledged to be a nation. A cry for peace was raised in England, and the fighting which followed was to salve the pride of George the Obstinate.

The effect of that tremendous day on the American people can not be pictured. The first stage was a fever of joy, followed by the consciousness of nationalism and a rapid growth of dignity. Purpose took the place of uncertainty.

We approached Europe as a free nation rather than isolated colonies. So, I maintain, we won the war on October 16th, 1777, and Bucks and I were there to see the curtain drop. There followed the fighting in the south, but there came the day when the last port was evacuated, and the last enemy boat sailed away; and I was free to return north and pick up my life and fit it to the new conditions.

Will Bucks left me on the banks of the Potomac, forever done with what he deemed to be an inhospitable climate. He went on his way to the mountains of Virginia, and I watched him out of sight. He was much affected at the parting and sought to cover his emotion by singing lustily. The last I heard of his genial voice he was giving a bit of verse that originally appeared in the London *Morning Post* and afterward set to a rude tune over here:

> Gage nothing did and went to pot;
> Howe lost one town and other got;
> Guy nothing did and nothing won;
> Dunmore was homeward forced to run.
> Clinton was beat and got a garter.
> And bouncing Burgoyne catch's Tatar.
> Thus all we gain for millions spent
> Is to be laughed at and repent.

Only eight lines and they contain the history of the war in so far as England's generals failed. That this and similar frank admissions were freely printed in the English press is one indication of the great host over there desiring peace and amity between America and the mother-country.

There comes a picture of my northern home and the wonder of having a home and little children and to be done with warring. And sometimes in our evenings before the blazing logs, while the Winter wind wailed outside as though keening for the forest dead who gave all that I might have a home, she would turn to me and gently ask:

"Sorry, lad, at losing the Beauty?"

Ah, Betsy Osmond! Betsy Osmond! As though any beauty, even Mistress Audrey's, could compensate for thy dear face! Heart and soul American, you typed the best of the race, and when the wind wails now it's but an echo of my loneliness.

THE END

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The Hick

by Hapsburg Liebe

Author of "That Everlasting Woman," "So Long, Jim," etc.

"SO YOU met a man on the road who recommended my place here, and who told you to ask me for the wire-tapper story, eh?" smiled fat old "Pop" Magrew, garrulous and more or less erudite proprietor of one of the some thirty Florida hotels named The Magnolia. "Very well, sir. Now just look across the street, and you'll see the hero—there between those two cabbage-palms—that tall young fellow in laced boots and broad hat. His name is Hape Caruthers——"

AS PERHAPS you know, Florida is a Winter-time mecca for thousands of wealthy Snowbirds—Northerners, that is; no disrespect, of course. Just as the baby rabbit has its moccasin and the sparrow its hawk, just so does the Snowbird have his automobile thief and his wire-tapper. Four Winters ago there was an epidemic of wire-tappers in this State, and they got away with it beautifully for the most part.

Men who were as shrewd as you please at home, came down here and bit at the old wire-tapping game like they were starving for it. The majority of them wouldn't admit that they had been caught, so there wasn't a great deal for the authorities to work on. For instance, there was a Senator from New England, a Congressman from the Middle West, one of the biggest doctors in New York, and an ex-governor or two—but I mustn't be personal.

Well, in a tourists' town over in west Florida, three of those tappers succeeded in pulling off a big deal. The law got on their trail quickly, and they left the scene of operations in a high-powered motor-car. Telephones got to working, and all roads that led anywhere much were watched. But the big car disappeared, and the tappers got away.

A sizable reward was offered, and there was a good deal of hunting for them here in this county. You see, they had been headed in this direction when they disappeared.

Now about Hape Caruthers.

Hape was only twenty then; but he was as big as he is now, and a fine farmer and grove man for his age. He hated work like poison, so he did as much tapper-hunting as anybody, and maybe a little more. One day after the excitement had reached its peak and begun to drop, Hape walked in home all covered with black swamp mud, and met his daddy on the porch.

"When are you goin' to stop this fool business and get to work?" old Hen Caruthers wanted to know. "I got a new mule—"

"Dog-gone it," said Hape, "I got something up my sleeve. Let me alone, pap. I don't care nothing about no new mule."

He really did have something up his sleeve. He had found a big, high-powered motor-car that had been driven out a dim woods road until the road became impassable; then the car had been side-tracked, as it were, and hidden deep in a thicket of young pines.

Hape had come home for something to eat before setting out to trail the three men by their footprints. But he didn't tell his daddy about this. All he would say was:

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"I got something up my sleeve. I don't care nothing about no new mule."

It was late in the day, so Hape waited until morning to set out on his adventure. He carried his gun and took along the old 'coon-dog, so that he could pretend to be after game.

The car was as he had left it. Footprints in the white sand showed him plainly that return trips had been made to the car, and Hape followed the trail easily. Two miles through the scrub-oak and palmetto, and he was in a thick pine woods. Through the woods he saw a brown tent pitched on the shore of a clear lake that had cypress-trees growing all the way around it.

Hape made a detour in order to keep the men from suspecting that he had trailed them, and approached the camp from the lake shore. He saw a canvas boat near the tent, and a paddle in the boat. Beside a near-by log was a burned-down fire, and on the log lay a frying-pan and some parcels containing food.

Hape stole closer to the tent and listened. He heard voices.

"I can't open it."

Rap, rap.

"I pass."

Rap, rap.

Rap, rap, rap.

"Pass."

"Poker!" grinned Hape.

"I'm tired of this," said the first voice. "We can play cards when we can't fish. I'm going after that whopper that gave me the *cosloshalunge!* this morning. Buck, what the —— did you do with my rod?"

HAPE led his dog back a little way, hid behind a friendly pine and watched. Three rather large men in the outdoor toggery that city folk wear when in the woods, their caps set rakishly, came from the tent, and one of them had a casting-outfit in his hands.

The latter-named walked out on a big cypress log that lay half in the lake, and spent ten minutes in pulling out back-lashes and using sort of—er, extempo-raneous language. The other two watched, nudged one another, and held in laughter with difficulty.

Now if Hape Caruthers was strong on anything, it was casting for bass. It made him sick to see a man with a fifty-dollar outfit messing things up like that. So Hape struck up whistling as if there were nothing on earth that mattered, and strolled up to the cypress log.

"Howdy!" he grinned. "What luck? Say, you're using the wrong bait, mister. Dark bait on a bright day, bright bait on a dark day, y'know. That's a reg'lar barber-pole you got there. A rainbow ain't in it with that bait. Got a green floater with only two sets o' hooks?"

He put his gun down beside his dog, and assumed charge then and there. He put on a green bait, straightened the fine line on the beautiful reel, and deftly cast fully fifty yards up the edge of the lake. There was a quick swirl and a lightning-like *cosloshalunge!*

Hape jerked slightly to set the hooks. The rod bent, and he let a little line out——

"Got 'im!" cried Hape. "Got 'im! Get that boat into the water. He's workin' toward them bonnets out there——"

It was a big-mouthed bass of at least nine pounds—Oh, yes, I've seen them that weighed above seventeen. When it lay on the pine needles after a prince of a fight, the amateur caster walked up to Hape and took him by an arm.

"We need you here to show us how to fish," he said. "Name your price—grub thrown in."

The other two city men looked toward the would-be caster and frowned, and Hape saw it.

"Well, how'd a dollar a day strike you?" said Hape.

He could have got five or ten as easily as he got the one. But Hape wasn't there for mere wages. The would-be caster's companions dragged him aside and spoke to him sharply in low tones. It was plain that they didn't want a stranger in their camp. Hape strained his ears, and he caught this from his champion—

"Oh, he's all right, that hick."

"I'll show you," said Hape to himself, "who's the hick. You just wait, dog-gone you."

Well, Hape stayed, and he got so deeply interested in fishing that he almost forgot his real mission. The first names of the three—he found out by simply listening—were Buck, Bill, and Dave, and it was Dave that liked the lake so well.

Maybe I forgot to tell you that they were well-educated and well-traveled men. It takes that sort of fellow to pull down anything in the wire-tapping game.

When Hape Caruthers had become settled in his job he began to turn his mind over and over and end for end in the attempt to find some plan by which he could take the three men to the sheriff. If he went to the officer

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and had him come out to the camp and make the arrests, he, Hape, would get little glory and little reward; and he knew it.

It was up to him, you see, to take them in single-handed.

He wasn't long without a plan. Hape Caruthers was more or less resourceful, even if he was a hick.

First he got them interested in 'coon-hunting, though their hunts failed to show them anything in the shape of a 'coon. Then he caught one of the tricky little animals secretly in a trap, and dragged it through the woods and scrub, by a crooked course, three miles to a phosphate mine that was working about half the time.

He left the 'coon in the brush, went over to the mine tracks and drove a little bargain with a man he knew, returned for the 'coon, and dragged it into an empty box car and closed and fastened one of the side-doors.

This done, he hurried back to the camp, untied his dog, and found Buck, Bill and Dave playing poker in the tent.

"HELLO, Hape," said Dave. "How about giving the lake a once-around? I heard some big boys striking out there among the lily-pads."

"I believe," grinned Hape, "I know where there's a 'coon. Let's try a daylight hunt, eh?"

"Me for the 'coon!" yelled Buck. "I've never seen one, and I've heard of them all my life. Let's go!"

"I'm unanimous," said Bill. "I've never seen one, either. Lead on, *Macbeth*, lead on."

This to Hape.

Hape went out, put a longer cord on his dog's collar, and set out through the woods with the dog in leash. The others crowded close upon his heels. The dog picked up the scent, bayed, sprang against the leash, and whined.

"Fresh!" said Hape. "I'll sure show you a 'coon this time."

"If you don't, we'll duck you in the lake," said Buck; and Hape Caruthers told himself:

"I got your duckin' me in the lake, right here in my pocket. I'll show you who's the hick."

The dog became more and more eager as he followed the trail that his master had manufactured. The four men trotted along gleefully behind him. Out of the woods and scrub they went, and hurried after the dog toward a lone box car on a siding at the phosphate mine.

At the one open side-door the dog stopped and began to bay loudly.

"Treed!" yelled Hape. "Get in there, you fellows, if you want to see a 'coon—hurry!"

According to Hape Caruthers, the three couldn't have climbed into the car any quicker if the devil himself had been after them. Then Hape shoved the door to, fastened it, and beckoned to a man who waited in the cab of a steaming mine locomotive a hundred yards down the track.

The locomotive came sputtering up, and Hape coupled the car to it. There was the violent hammering of half a dozen fists on the inside of the door that had just been closed, and shouting that was muffled and dim.

"Got 'em!" said Hape, climbing upon the engine's pilot and waving a signal to the driver. "Got 'em! Hick, am I? If I was in town, maybe I'd be a hick. But out here, it's them that's hicks. Pull 'er wide open, Jimmy!"

Jimmy pulled her open. Twenty-five dollars danced before Jimmy's eyes. The road ran through the Caruthers place at the edge of town, and Hen Caruthers saw his son Hape on the engine's tender.

"Hey! That new mule—" bawled old Hen.

"Dang that new mule!" the victorious Hape bawled back.

Into town they rumbled, halting at the phosphate company's shipping-point. Hape jumped to the ground and ran to the sheriff's office. The officer and all the deputies available were persuaded to go with Hape, and people joined them in the race until half the town was with them when they arrived. Even Hen Caruthers himself was there when Hape unfastened the car door.

The three walked to the door, their faces pictures of amusement and wonderment, and laughed at sight of the sheriff and his deputies standing in a semi-circle with drawn weapons.

It was the sheriff who spoke first.

"My gosh!" he exploded.

He was an old-timer, and he knew many of the regular Winter visitors Florida had then. "Hape, you hick! Wire-tappers your grandmaw! The tappers you're thinking about was caught in Jaxville yesterday. These men——"

The campers were the Middle-West Congressman, the New England Senator and the big New York doctor. Hape turned to his laughing dad.

"Pap," he said soberly, "whereabouts is that there new mule?"

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The Yacht ADVENTURE

by Frank H. Shaw

Author of "The Out of Dates," "The King of Spades," etc.

CASTLE was serving as mate of a guano bark, loading its stinking cargo at Lobos—which is a cluster of insignificant islands off the west coast of South America—when he received the news. The infrequent schooner that brought such luxuries as fresh water and the mails, drifted to her anchors almost alongside the *Valescure*.

Castle—known aboard his ship as "Hard-Case Thornton"—was down in the main hold, using a shovel as it should be used. He had just knocked out the ship's bad-man, and entitled him to a week's confinement to his bunk; but as the work of trimming the guano must needs go forward without interruption, he took up the abandoned shovel in his bleeding hands, and set a pace that caused even the best trained of the sailors to pant and curse.

"Is the mate down there?" asked Captain Rysland. "Tell him there's a letter for him."

"It can wait," said Thornton.

Wait it did until the dinner hour. Captain Rysland was delicately carving an eight-pound chunk of salt beef when his next senior strolled leisurely into the saloon.

"Did you get your letter, Mr. Mate? I left it in your room," said Rysland.

"I did, sir—thanks."

Thornton chuckled softly. Hard labor in the pungent atmosphere of a guano hold had sharpened his appetite, and he was inordinately fond of salt beef. He attacked the liberal plateful with gusto.

"Well—any news?" asked the captain, who had received none, with the exception of a badly written note of recrimination from a Valparaisan washerwoman, whose bill he had omitted to pay.

"Nothing much, sir. At least—I'm Lord Castle now. My grandfather and uncle got spitchered in a railway accident, both at once; and I come in for the title."

Captain Rysland solemnly laid down his knife and fork, which he had hitherto held upright on the table. Then he opened his mouth and breathed heavily. He was a man who did not approve of jokes at his own expense. A piece of gristly salt horse went down the wrong way as a result of his action; and by the time the steward had resuscitated him, Lord Castle had finished his plateful and was casting longing glances at the badly carved joint.

"Kidding?" asked the captain wheezily.

"No; honest to ——, sir; I'm a real live lord."

Captain Rysland wiped his forehead, which needed it, and sneezed four times.

"Any cash with it, your lordship?" he inquired.

"A million or so—your majesty."

"Have some more salt beef? Help yourself. I've never shaken hands with a lord yet—so if you don't mind——"

They shook hands.

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"It'll take a lot of living down," was Rysland's next remark.

"Being a peer, sir? Yes, it will count against a chap, I suppose."

"I was meaning your having been mate of a manure barge, like this. You'll be wanting to get home pretty quick, I expect? Mind, I'm thinking what's best for you, my lord. Hadn't you better have something done to your hands—ha, ha! That fellow Simms that you knocked out will expect to be signed on as second mate now, because he's been floored by a peer of the realm!"

He laughed boisterously at his own wit.

"But," he added more soberly, "the second mate isn't much, and I somehow can't see him as mate, when you've gone. And as for a second mate—well——"

Castle grinned.

"I signed articles to complete the trip, and I've never jumped a ship yet. I'm going home with you, if you don't mind."

"What? As a lord and a millionaire?"

"No, as mate. That is, unless you've any fault to find with my work."

"I tell you this, as I've told you before, Mister Mate—that I've never sailed shipmates with a better sailor; and that isn't said because you're a lord. You're a loss to us. It doesn't take much to make a peer, but a sailing-ship sailor, now—well, that's different."

He spoke with the utmost sincerity, and maybe he was not far wrong. And during all the rest of his companionship with Castle he never once asked a favor for himself. Consequently, at a later date, he was astonished to receive a notification that he had been appointed marine superintendent to a large firm of steamship owners—of which Lord Castle was a principal shareholder.

And during the homeward passage Castle continued to serve as mate—to the satisfaction of all saving the forecastle malcontents.

Arrived home, his lordship claimed his inheritance. He settled down in a mighty mansion in Berkshire, and astonished the neighborhood by filling his spare rooms with collier mates and windjammer skippers who were secretly glad when their visits terminated. Captain Rysland's final words on parting were:

"I'll give you a year ashore—then you'll feel the old hunger grip you. I know—I tried it; running a rigging-loft at Blyth. Well, if you make as good a peer as you are a sailor, it won't be any the worse for the country."

THERE are yachts and yachts. Some are built to gratify a woman's whim. Some come into being because their owners are imbued with a passionate love of the world's open spaces and a hatred of the hidebound conventions of the land. Some work out their appointed destinies rooting and digging at safe moorings in sheltered harbors; others lay their tired bones to an ultimate rest in the far places of the world.

The *Adventure* was built for use, not show; and her owner was a man who considered—rightly, according to his standards—that a week at Cowes did not entirely fill pleasure's bill.

"I want a craft that can go anywhere and do anything," he told the builders.

"Certainly, sir," they replied, and made suggestions.

It is doubtful if a single one of all the many craftsmen who toiled on the shapely fabric during following months, had any conception of the ultimate destiny of the *Adventure*. Or, it may be that these dingy yet cunning toilers built into the hull all their restrained longings for a life removed from the orderly run of a commonplace civilization.

Whatever the cause, the effect was that the *Adventure* became a very stormy petrel amongst her kind. Ships are that way. They set out on their career with the best intentions, but circumstances are too strong for them. They kick over the traces at unexpected moments; they steer devious courses in no wise intended by their first designers; they wander here, there, and everywhere—that is why they are designated as belonging to the feminine persuasion.

It was Yvonne Callister who broke the bottle of champagne over her bows as she slid down the greased ways as gracefully as a swan—and that sponsoring may have accounted for much of what ultimately happened. Every one knows what became of Yvonne—she ruled a country for a year; she sang and danced in a Montmartre cabaret for another; and she avoided the common fate of detected spies by taking poison in her cell on the very morning set apart for her execution.

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But there the *Adventure* was—a thing of nautical beauty; big, roomy and powerful. Said Lord Castle, her originator, at the ensuing luncheon—

"I wonder what in the name of all the seven seas, I've let myself in for!"

And the coming years were to show him in part an answer to that question.

The keel of the *Adventure* had been laid exactly nine months after the *Valescure* paid off. Castle sometimes wondered how he had managed to wait so long. He grinned happily during the trial trip, and told the shipbuilders' representative that he wished he had gone in for a sailing-yacht—"with an auxiliary screw at most. This isn't going to sea, as I've known it."

But the *Adventure* behaved so well that he decided to be content; and set about choosing a crew. Possessing, as his lordship did, an extra master's certificate, the captaincy of the yacht was decided automatically. He picked his men by hand, and even the greatest maritime critic could not have found fault with his final selection. Manned as she was, the *Adventure* was fit to go anywhere and do anything—in reason. Lord Castle set to work to forget those weary months ashore.

CAPTAIN LYONS, of the S. S. *Travancore*, was in an argumentative mood. This was partly due to inherent tendencies—he was a man of scant tolerance for the world of gilded idlers—partly it was due to the fact that he had looked with favor on the wine of Madeira. He slammed a horny fist on the marble-topped table and flushed a vivid brick-red.

"You ought to try *my* end of sea-faring," he proclaimed. "Pah! I've no use for you folks that go giddying around in fine weather in a flash yacht with nickel plated trimmings. Owner of that swagger packet lying out there at the buoys, aren't you?"

"Yes, I'm owner of the *Adventure*," said Castle mildly.

He was immaculate in white drill, and Captain Lyons surveyed him critically. He was a man who had no sympathy with men who affected a neatness of person. As owner of the *Travancore*, he insisted on his officers working for their keep, and a white collar was an abhorrence to his fastidious taste. He held that no true sailor ever took a second thought to his personal appearance; and bragged on occasion of his own early days—when sailors were sailors.

"Skippering her yourself, as like as not?" he remarked, drinking deeply at the small tumbler of wine.

"Yes—it's a whim of mine, cap'n."

"Doing an honest, hard-working shipmaster out of a job. Well, you can take this from me: If ever you get into trouble and I happen along, don't ask me to hoist you out of it by the slack of your pants; because I won't—and that's flat!"

"Time enough to meet trouble when trouble comes along. Your glass is empty—have another?"

"I'll drink with my own breed," said the skipper magnificently, and betook himself, a thought unsteadily, to another table, where a hirsute man in thick pilot-cloth and a square-cut bowler was imbibing rum.

Castle listened to the gusty deep-water talk that went on, and felt his soul warm to the debaters. He heard them take ships into mysterious seas, and force them up hitherto unexploited rivers, and recognized them for what they were—real pioneers of the empire-making school. Their idiosyncracies he smiled at tolerantly, knowing their worth. These, he would have it, were the real seafarers—for himself he was now nothing but a dilettante sailor. True, he had taken the *Adventure* to remarkable places and done remarkable things; but—he craved for a life of real action.

"I've more than half a mind to lay up the yacht and sign on again in a windjammer," he thought. "Or else—why not?—hire her out to do a bit of gun-running—there's always something of that sort going on."

He submerged himself in a pleasant reverie of hair's-breadth danger; and Captain Lyons, mellowed by liquor, laid a compelling hand on his shoulder as he walked, none too steadily, toward the door.

"Being that you're a *sort* of a sailor," he said thickly, as if afflicted with adenoids, "I'll give you a tip. That gentleman I've been talking to—master of the *Foaming Wave*—called in for coal; outward bound for Port Stanley. He tells me there's a nasty smack of bad weather brewing up north. Says he's never seen the bay so unlikable—and he knows what he's talking about. I'm not scared for myself, but—thought I'd pass the hint on. You take my advice, Mister Yachtsman—you stick snug at your moorings for a week or so, or else go south.

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The bay isn't going to be any safe place for gilt-edged amateurs."

"Thanks, cap'n; I'll bear that in mind."

"You'd better—otherwise you might be giving extra work to my kind, that haven't any time to waste in rescuing the perishing in great waters. Well, no one can say you've not had your warning, mister."

"I'm much obliged. Have a drink, won't you?"

Captain Lyons smiled oilily and tolerantly; he was still magnificent.

"I don't need any pay for tipping the wink. You've had about enough liquor, I'd say—and drink isn't good for men that use the sea."

He tacked out into the open, and a waft of profanity floated over his shoulder as he went. He had small use for yachtsmen, Castle decided. All the way down the sun-swept street Captain Lyons sang a song of mingled praise and derision—praise for his own lordly self, derision of such natty no-sailor amateurs as took a yacht into easy waters and flattered themselves that they were sailors.

"I suppose if I'd told him that I was once mate of the *Valescure* he'd have—well, the Lord knows what he'd have done," ruminated Castle. "I think we'll run north—though, gad, it'll be good to have a real old dusting!"

From the after-deck of the immaculate *Adventure* he later watched the *Travancore* proceed to sea, to make her way northward across the Bay of Biscay. She was deep-laden, for Captain Lyons was a money-loving man who cared nothing for the comfort of himself and his underlings so that his bank balance attained sufficient proportions. Her decks were piled high with cargo; she seemed unwieldy and sluggish. For the rest she was a full-powered tramp of perhaps four thousand tons.

Castle chuckled as he watched her go. She swung quite close to the white and shining *Adventure* in her maneuvering, and laved her teakwood rails copiously with her exhaust water. A bedraggled cook emptied a bucketful of galley-refuse on to the yacht's shining decks in a contemptuous way. Captain Lyons looked over the bridge weather-cloth.

"You don't forget what I told you. I'll tell it you again," he said. "Keep snug in harbor this next week—there's going to be —— weather in the bay. I told you that when I was drunk—I repeat it sober. You sit tight and pray for those in peril on the sea."

"I'll not forget," said Castle.

Then he sent for his chief engineer.

THE *Travancore* was making the heaviest sort of weather of it. She wallowed sickly in a weltering immensity of fury-lashed water; giant combers, hissing as to their milk-white crests, thunderous as to their solid portions, galloped over her squattering hull in melancholy procession.

"It's penny wise and pound foolish," said her hard-bitten chief engineer, up on the chattering bridge. "I warned you about that crack in the tail-shaft, too; but you were all out for profits. Weel, I paid my insurance premiums, so my wife'll be no scunnert."

"If you were the sort of engineer I took you to be," said Captain Lyons, "you would have refused to sail with the shaft in such a precarious condition. You treated it lightly—after that dinner I bought you."

"Listen at this, cap'n. Ye knew as well as I did that the shaft was impairfect. Ye bought me that dinner—I'll no' deny the drink was good—o' set purpose. Like a fool I sacrificed ma professional wisdom for the fleshpots, and made an Esau o' myself. An' jobs aren't that easy come by, though there's been times when I had the thought that I'd rather be chief engineer o' a soda-water factory than chief o' the *Travancore*."

Captain Lyons said certain things that in his opinion fitted the occasion. He said the same things over three times.

But all the torrential blasphemy in the world could not alter the fact that the *Travancore*'s propeller was now lying at the bottom of the Bay of Biscay, and that a gale of enormous magnitude was raging. Very bitterly he deplored the wave of false economy that had led him to take the ship to sea in an imperfect condition.

The ship was rioting giddily in the heave and swing of the seas; and because she was so deep-laden—meanness again—she had no resilience. She slumped under the down-pouring combers, which increased their venomous assaults with every minute that passed; she snorted impotently, remembering presumably that she had once been an aggressive fighting unit of the mercantile

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marine, and not always a sheer and helpless hulk. For there are few things more futile at sea than a broken-down tramp steamer that will neither steam, steer nor anchor.

Bad as the immediate prospect was, the future prospect was infinitely worse, if the portent of the livid sky were anything to judge by—as Captain Lyons did so judge, being weather-wise as a result of much painful experience in the art of money-getting in an exacting trade.

On the steamer's forecastle the deck-officers and the sparse crew were slaving bitterly, with many furious outcries, at the work of creating an efficient sea-anchor out of insufficient materials. It was something over an hour since the engines, after soul-chattering racings, had set up a very devils' chorus of screamings and hissings and thumping din, after which—that was the moment the chief engineer discovered the fact that the weakened propeller had taken a three-thousand-fathom dive on its own account—there ensued a silence that was ominous by its very suddenness.

During this hour the giant seas had played havoc with the upperworks of the *Travancore;* as could be told from the few tortured splinters of wood that still hung in the twisted davits, sole tokens of four one-time efficient life-boats. And it would be at least another half-dozen hours before the sea-anchor could be completed; that is, if a sailorlike job were to be made of it.

Captain Lyons gaped into the threatening eye of the wind and wished fervently that he had never been born. The winged words of his irate chief engineer, as excited as a Scots mechanic well could be, still troubled his brain. Of his own possible fate he cared little—his stingy soul was half broken by reason of his immediate loss—the visible loss in gear.

For, being out to make money in large quantities, he had omitted to insure his vessel, both against total loss and three-per-cent. damage. The ruined boats would cost a miniature fortune to replace; the new tail-shaft was an item to be reckoned with in sweating agony of heart; and, worst of all, as it was utterly impossible for the *Travancore* to make port unaided, there would be a pretty enough bill for salvage ultimately presented. He was anything but happy as he stared over the blistering ugliness of the storm-torn bay.

"Look alive, there!" he bellowed to the forecastle head. "Quit that loafing; you're paid to work!"

The mate shouted something over his shoulder that the wind fortunately mutilated; but Lyons heard something about "starvation-packet," and danced impotently on his aerie. He had too consistently served out the wrong kind of treatment to insure loyal service in moments of crisis; he had sown the bread of stinginess for long upon the waters, and now it was being returned—with accrued interest. There being nothing worth while to be done on the bridge, he dashed into the chart-room, scrutinized the barometer, which lengthened his face and caused him to choke; and then plunged headlong into action.

Green water sluiced him down as he negotiated the well-deck forward; he tore his oilskins on such as remained of the deck cargo—there was surprizingly little of it by now; he rasped his skin and frayed his temper before gaining the forecastle-head; but once there he made ample amends; so that the dog-tired men snarled at him, and invited him to bear a hand himself in the Herçulean toil.

They slaved on, with most of the heart gone out of them—weakend by rotten food and not enough of it; and Captain Lyons heard things said that he had never expected to hear. Even so, with captain cursing and mates driving, the sea-anchor could not be ready for hours; and—the gale was taking a curious groaning note into its lusty bellow that made the more seasoned men glance meaningly at one another.

Captain Lyons went back to the bridge. The *Travancore,* so far as might be ascertained, was entirely alone in the horrible wilderness of vicious spite. The force of the storm had closed in the horizon to small dimensions; but there was sufficient clearness to enable Lyons to satisfy himself that nothing of a succoring nature was in sight. He disconsolately bent on two flags of the International Code and hoisted them—it took him all his time and strength—to the span. These flags signified that the *Travancore* was in distress and asked assistance. The action was about on a par with baling out the Atlantic with a cigaret tin.

"That's it—finish it!" grated the skipper as a gray-bearded comber hove itself high above the squattering hull, and fell with a jarring roar that seemed to shake the tramp's rivets loose in their sockets.

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There were many succeeding crashes, there were screeches and sounds suggestive of solid wood being riven to slivers—when the inrushing waters cleared, the tramp presented a strange, clean-shaven appearance—she was gaunt, uglier than ever.

"I wonder what it'll be like when night closes down!" meditated Lyons, and wished that he had not been so niggardly in the matter of insurance and food.

He looked from the denuded decks to the milky, veined abomination of desolation that raged overside; he scanned the narrowed horizon, and a great loneliness settled coldly upon his spirit. He would have summoned the chief engineer to companion him, but that worthy was busy in the engine-room, trying to cope with the nasty leak through the stern-gland; he was driving his firemen like cab-horses at theater time, and a seven-eighths spanner was aiding him handsomely.

So Lyons refreshed himself with a further searching of the horizon, and—stood at gaze, his nostrils opening and shutting like those of a maddened horse. Away to the southward showed a wind-tortured plume of smoke.

Captain Lyons drew the bridge binoculars—they were of poor quality—from their box, and adjusted them. Then he polished the lenses on his handkerchief and tried again—with poor results. He would have cursed the makers of the glasses if he had not remembered in time that he had picked them up dirt cheap in a pawn-shop some considerable time before. When he got them to his liking he scrutinized the tuft of smoke that showed, dark against the darkling sky, a trivial suggestion of hope in a tumultuous world where hopelessness seemed the predominant note.

"Rotten man-o'-fight!" he declared tersely.

He had a poor opinion of the Royal Navy, in common with most merchant seamen. He believed that it specialized in "joy rides," which were dignified under the expression "showing the flag;" and spit and polish, together with occasional *thés dansants* on the meticulously holystoned quarterdecks. In this viewpoint, maybe, he was right.

But the craft that vomited the tufts of smoke was not a warship. He discovered this fact a little later.

"A yacht—and that's worse," he said. "Dandy sailormen—but they've been taken unawares for once. If that tail-shaft had held out—"

He tantalized himself with imaginings. Had the *Travancore* retained her full power, and had such a vessel as this approaching yacht loomed in sight in such weather as was now raging, Captain Lyons would have kept his ship doggedly in touch, hoping his hardest that some circumstance would happen to cause the yacht to require assistance, which would be rendered—at a price.

He decided there and then, watching the clean-run craft drive tempestuously through the seas, that God had definitely deserted His faithful servant, Obadiah Lyons. He had forgotten the two International Code flags that still fretted and whipped in the gale—so much as was left of them—overhead; and consequently he was astonished to see a gaily colored string of bunting soar to the yacht's masthead. He read the flags and consulted the Code Book.

" 'Do you need assistance?' " he gulped.

Then he turned to meet a strong deputation from the crew, which had mounted the bridge without permission.

"But it's a gaudy yacht," he protested. "A stick-and-string pleasure hooker! It can't *do* anything."

"It's got twin screws, and we haven't got one," said the mate; "and it's coming on to blow like merry ——! Best answer him—or I will."

LORD CASTLE, snugged behind the *Adventure*'s dodger, smoking a comforting pipeful of real swearing Maiden's Vow tobacco, chuckled and slapped his thighs.

"And there are some who say there's no answer to prayer," he told his mate. "That's the *Travancore*—the ship that was lying at Funchal with us. Her skipper told me that he hadn't overmuch use for yachtsmen. Broken down, from the look of her, isn't she?"

"Quite broken down," agreed the *Adventure*'s mate. "A nasty mess a ship can make of herself when she sets her mind to it! Going to rescue her people, sir?"

"Biggins, my son, I'm going to salve that packet. I'm going to tow her home or tow this number-one-size yacht clean under; one thing or the other. Rouse up that wire hawser, and run a double bridle of the twelve-inch hemp round the whole after

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part—those bitts won't stand what we've got in front of us."

"Towing, eh? Well, if there's any man can do the job you can, sir—my lord, I ought to say."

Now Mr. Biggins was not given to sycophancy, and praise for his associates was a matter usually beyond his ken.

"We'll twist that comic joker's tail," said Castle, rubbing his hands. "As soon as you've got the gear in shape, come to the bridge—I want you to handle her whilst I take the boat away."

When the mate had commenced to busy himself in workmanlike fashion, Castle took the wheel himself and ran the *Adventure* down toward the wallowing *Travancore*. Captain Lyons indulged in sarcasm.

"I'm not requiring a bumboat—thanks," he bellowed through an ancient megaphone.

"No—a rag-and-bone merchant's more in your line," responded Castle in a voice that had once been famous clear along the Pacific coast. "Want a tow?"

"Yes; but I'm waiting till a ship comes along," was Lyons' reply. "Take care you don't scratch the gilding off that cockboat of yours. Phew!"

He recognized that the slim white yacht was being handled much as a skilled juggler handles a ball. There was some one in charge with the instincts of a seaman.

"Have you looked at your barometer lately?" asked Castle as the *Adventure*, after running almost alongside the *Travancore*, reeled and plunged away into more open water, with the big water rioting over her upper decks.

"Thought he was going to hang himself up in my bally davits!" Captain Lyons informed himself; and went to look at the glass again.

It was a horrifying sight; the mercury was cupped and pumping savagely. Away to windward a vivid, steely glare showed in a gap in the lowering monstrosity of the ragged clouds; it seemed as if the whole elemental spite of all the cyclones that had ever devastated a long-suffering world were massing there for an onslaught that would plane the ocean clear of all such things as were not a concrete part of primary Creation. The soul of Captain Lyons grew as water within him. Real crawling fear, such as he had perhaps never known before, possessed him.

"My ——!" he said.

He repeated the words a moment or two later, and then rubbed his eyes; for something was happening out there in the frothing waste. The yacht, her engines moving slowly, was bowing the sea and permitting herself slowly to trickle down toward the overwrought *Travancore*. Even without the faulty binoculars, Lyons could see that men were busy with a boat; they appeared to be coiling down a mighty rope.

"But—he's a yachtsman—a yachtsman!" Lyons protested. "He can't be——!"

But he was. As Lyons watched, the *Adventure* lowered a boat—a good boat. That boat set out across the surge and welter of the combers, and it was handled as a boat in a heavy sea should be handled. A tall, jerseyed figure stood in the sternsheets.

From the almost exhausted toilers on the *Travancore's* drenched forecastle came the ghost of a ragged cheer. They watched the boat as dying sinners might watch Heaven's gate—wondering whether it will open to their knocking. Then, as the boat—now swept high, now all but engulfed—drew nearer, they busied themselves in preparation.

A line was thrown—it fell short. It was thrown again. The tall man in the boat's stern made a leap that actually took him out of his craft; but the stroke oar snatched at his feet and saved him. When Castle straightened, panting, he held the end of the heaving line in his hand.

"Haul in," he said, "if it's any use to you."

The *Travancore's* men needed no second bidding; they greedily hauled in the lines to which was attached the mighty wire hawser. Castle scrambled nimbly up a rope that was thrown. Drenched as he was—unshaven for two days, clad roughly—there was little to associate him with the dapper duck-clad dandy of the Madeiran café. He stumped to the tramp's bridge like a man who knows his way about.

"I'm not giving orders on another man's ship," he said; "but judging by the weather you'd be well advised to take such help as is offering."

Captain Lyons, obsessed by many cares, failed to recognize him.

"For ——'s sake get us bow on to this before it comes down properly!" he entreated. "And we can talk of the price later."

Castle laughed.

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"Good enough," he said, and disappeared.

The *Adventure* went ahead as her boat was drawn alongside. Just as the tremendous tow-rope gave the first hint of tightening, the vivid steely patch in the windward sky grew bigger and brighter—then it was as if some solid convulsion had attacked the world. The guttering *Travancore* was lifted bodily and set back, like an empty orange-box; she heeled as if about to capsize. Captain Lyons could do nothing; he was flattened against his own wheelhouse like a rag—beaten half insensible by the sheer weight of wind.

He could only gasp and struggle like a cockchafer on a pin. When he recovered and fought a breathless way to the precarious shelter of the weather-dodger, he rubbed his eyes. The yacht was stolidly towing! White water smothered her; she labored weirdly; but her slim bow was notched into the eye of the wind, and inch by inch she was dragging the *Travancore* into position to fight the storm. Though the pluck on her stern dragged her back, she persisted.

"He can't do it!" gulped Lyons.

A little later, he said—

"He might do it!"

A little later still he said—

"By the Lord, he *has* done it!"

Not for nothing had Castle insisted on having the *Adventure* engined enormously. All that he was concerned about was whether the towing-hawser would hold—for the yacht he had no particular fear. He took advantage of every trifling lull; he made the galloping waves assist him—spray-blinded, drenched and sore, he steered the *Adventure* toward the brightest point of all that terrifying brightness to windward. So that when the real force of the storm—all that came before had been merely preliminary to the main display—struck them he had the *Travancore's* bow pointed clear across the volleying seas. Then he settled down to beat that historic storm at its own game.

It was no light matter. Sodden and helpless, the *Travancore* further handicapped the overburdened yacht. It was like attempting to tow an island from its moorings. Once or twice the *Adventure's* crew came to the bridge and suggested that, as their bare lives were matters of some moment to them, it was high time to cut the tow-rope and leave the *Travancore* to the mercy of the seas. But Castle had not been mate of the *Valescure* for nothing.

The men went forward again under the distinct impression that no abstract —— could be worse, or even as bad as existence lived under their owner's displeasure. To get rid of the blistering indictments that had been shouted to their address, they went below and stoked the furnaces so furiously that, working all out as she was, the *Adventure's* safety-valves protested.

For a night and a day and another night that hurricane continued; and at its passing the yacht looked like a well-boiled bone. Everything that could be flattened was flattened; she was now steering from aft, and her deck-fittings would have caused the lowest of marine-store dealers to turn up a contemptuous nose. But she was still going; and the hulking *Travancore* still sloughed wearily in her wake. There the tramp remained until the verdant slopes of Falmouth harbor surrounded her grimy bulk.

Captain Lyons gaped as a trim, clean-cut figure in a natty yachting-suit skipped up his ladder from the varnished motor-launch.

"You'll never tell me—" he began. "Lord—it's you! The man I sneered at for a yachtsman. The lines of your craft looked familiar enough, but I didn't see how it was possible—when we'd left you astern at a snug mooring at Funchal."

"Bygones are bygones," said Castle brightly.

"Come into my room—such as there's left of it, sir," said Lyons, not without humility. "I've never seen a cleverer bit of work. You must have a good skipper."

"I'm my own skipper, cap'n."

"The —— you are! Would you—would you mind shaking hands? And, touching on the question of salvage——"

"Oh, salvage be blowed! Man, the pleasure of doing it was reward enough for me. Buy those lads of mine a decent drink, and call it quits."

Lord Castle watched the varying expressions chase themselves across Captain Lyon's face.

"The worst of it is," he said, to give his companion a chance to recover, "this has unsettled me. I'll have to go looking for some sort of adventure worth while now."

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Red Night

By Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur

Author of "The Ace of Diamonds," "Fisherman's Luck," etc.

PIERRE FAIDIT rode alertly through the forest, his quick dark eyes noting every rustling bough, every quivering leaf. This was strange country—wild country—and therefore dangerous. A trained soldier, he let his glances rove ceaselessly while his brain occupied itself with his own troubled thoughts. His great hand caressed the shaft of his lance.

The most famous swordsman in France, he was—for the first time in seventeen years—masterless and homeless, uncertain for the future, and unhappy for the past. A great reputation had come to him early. Under that greatest prince of the South, Alphonse-Jourdain of Toulouse, he had proved himself a mighty soldier and a crafty leader of men. For this Count Alphonse, Lord of the Languedoc, Pierre had felt that great love which will take a man gladly into danger and death. Under Alphonse he had acquired all his skill, learning equal to an abbot's, and much glory. Now Alphonse was dead, poisoned by a wicked woman to satisfy an unfounded grudge.

The great service Pierre rendered King Louis on the Second Crusade had found him a captaincy of household troops after the death of Alphonse. He had not been happy in his work; for it was the queen, Aliénor of Aquitaine, who had murdered Count Alphonse. But Pierre was that rarest of things in the twelfth century—a French patriot; and he served King Louis from love of country.

Then he had committed a great offense with open eyes, and because he conceived the highest loyalty demanded it. He had been born a poor fisher-lad, had never learned the ways of the courtier and did not know how to lie for favor. He had told an unpleasant truth, and King Louis banished him. Now he must seek another master. Any noble in France would have paid highly for such a follower, but Pierre would follow none of them. Alphonse-Jourdain had taught him to love his country; and the French barons loved themselves more than France.

Therefore he had come to Normandy, which did not belong to the French king in the year 1150, being ruled by its own independent duke, Henry Plantagenet. Henry was a master whom any man might serve with pride. Rumor said he planned a war with England. Against England a French soldier could fight willingly, without rancor, and with high hope of honor. Stephen was king in England—a good man by his lights, but selfish and foolish, who had dared seize the throne that belonged rightfully to this young Henry, the great-grandson of William the Conqueror.

So Pierre had taken his horse aboard a flatboat and floated down the Seine to Evreux, to find the duke. But Henry had already departed for his hunting-seat at Col Rouge, and Pierre followed him across-country. It was now mid-afternoon, and he had ridden all day.

It was a ride to make a man merry, and most men would have been merry in Pierre's shoes. He was young—but one-and-thirty; his huge body pulsed with the strength of

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hard, smooth muscles and perfect health. He was graceful as a faun, and as handsome, with big dark eyes, a falcon nose and cheeks that glowed red under tanned olive. The firm lips, the strong chin, gave evidence of a life free from weakness.

His magnificent white charger bore his heavy weight and that of his splendid chain armor easily; the ruby-pommeled sword at his side would have graced a king's belt. A dozen campaigns and a thousand raids and roadside adventures, had made him illustrious. Above all, the jewel of his honor was untarnished. All this, and to ride free through the Norman forest with a soft breeze in his face and the scant golden sunshine filtering down through the warm green tops of ancient beech and sturdy oak!

A little river, the Avre, flowed down from the Norman hills into the rolling forest. It ran swiftly, for the forest floor undulated in great waves. All about Pierre's path the land rose from eight hundred to a thousand feet, heavily timbered with the virgin trunks that choke out all undergrowth, leaving long, leaf-carpeted aisles where a good horse finds fair going. The chattering of the river took Pierre's thoughts from his troubles, for its sound might mask other noises portending danger.

SUDDENLY the white charger snorted and increased his pace. Pierre's hand tightened on his lance. Far away, hidden by the mighty trees, something swift and violent was happening. A cry, distance-dimmed, rang out, and the clang of metal. Then all was still.

Pierre's spurs pricked deep. With a splendid surge the great horse gathered himself for the gallop. His hoofs kicked up thick lumps of damp soil. As the forest-aisles receded, Pierre's ears caught the jingle of mail and the nickering of horses. These guided him on through the wood, where eyes were of small use for any distance. The sunlight, which had lain in tiny spots and shafts, grew rapidly brighter. A little ahead, a square of greenish light marked the opening of a glade.

Now Pierre shifted his shield from shoulder to left arm, and, taking care to keep his long lance clear of the branches, swung the point forward. Reining in, he closed on the forest-opening cautiously, both to avoid ambush and to accustom his eyes to the increasing glare. At last he was under the trees which bordered the opening. A swift glance, and he understood. His lance-point sank to the horizontal, catching the sun in a sparkle of fire. He moved in the saddle, to get that knee-grip that holds the seat firm so the point can be guided well home.

In the middle of the glade, beside a spring-fed-pool bordered with saplings, sat a young man, bound and gagged. His body was trussed tight to a young oak; his legs dangled into the pool. Close by, five ill-looking fellows sat their horses jeering at him. They were well-armed, and their mounts were beautiful beasts; but they bore the stamp of broken men on their evil faces.

At the farther edge of the clearing four sturdy fellows were dragging two more captives with sacks over their heads, toward a circle of six horses, nose to nose, whose bridles were held by a scared groom. A bundle of weapons and mail was trussed to one saddle, and a jeweled horn dangled from the cantle.

Pierre knew the prisoners must have been attacked suddenly as they sat at their ease. There had been time for one wild sword-stroke—no more. Then they had been disarmed, plundered and tied. The groom, whose white face showed to which party he belonged, had had no time to mount and ride for help.

The two sacked captives were to be carried off, perhaps for ransom. He by the spring would doubtless be slain, Pierre thought, judging him an under-officer who

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would fetch small ransom. His surcoat had been torn off, so that there was no badge of family or service on him for the beholder to interpret. But his flat velvet cap bore a sprig of yellow broom—the emblem of the House of Plantagenet. Duke Henry, whose servant the youth must be, was the head of that house.

This, and his sympathy for the weaker party, determined Pierre's course. As he drove home the spurs one of the ruffians saw the sun flash on his armor and shouted an alarm. Flinging the groom aside, the rascals by the horses hastened to mount, while those at the pool turned to meet the newcomer.

"Take him alive!" one shouted. "He wears rich mail. A fat ransom!"

The speaker, a big man with a lance cut down to serve as javelin, rode straight for Pierre. One instant only the fellow hesitated whether to cast his weapon at horse or man. Then, at close range, it whirred for Pierre's face. But long service had taught Pierre to read the unwritten book of a foe's eyes, the movement of the weapon-arm, the elevation of the point. His three-cornered shield caught the javelin slantwise and dashed it aside. His lance bored in, through mail, breast and back. Then four more were upon him at once.

There was no time to tug the point free. Casting lance aside, Pierre drew his sword. It was his chosen weapon, and he the first fencer in France. These thieves were forest-men, fortunately who favored short weapons that would not catch in overhanging boughs. Blade to blade—Pierre's game!

Nor were the odds so heavy as they appeared. Better mail, better steel, a finer mount and greater skill—all these Pierre had to set against the greater number of his foes.

They rode at him in two waves: First, the four nearest, who had been by the pool; then, losing precious time in mounting and crossing the glade, the four who had been engaged with the prisoners. Their leader slain, they thought no more of capture, but flailed in to kill; while the man bound by the water chewed madly at his gag and glared his hate.

Circling him round, the first four crowded in on Pierre who met them with loose rein and flickering weapon. His horse he left to guide itself. He could trust its instinct; it had been trained in the shock of battle. As the foremost assailant struck, the white charger flung itself against his horse's shoulder like a stone from a catapult. Bandit and beast went down in a heap.

Two men lashed at Pierre from opposite flanks; one hand worked behind him. His feint drew one man's guard; his lunge pierced the throat. He turned to the man on his left just as an ill-timed back-stroke from the rear cut through the cantle of his saddle, glanced and bit into the white charger's flesh. The great horse flung out its heels in a frenzy, smashing the jaw of the beast behind. But the sudden plunge threw Pierre against the pommel, lowered his guard and exposed him to a blow that dented his helmet and filled his eyes with sparks.

Now came the second wave of attack, desperation and murder in every ruffian's eye. Two of their comrades were still in the battle. One, mounted, was exchanging blows with Pierre; while the second, in the rear, let his injured horse run shrieking into the wood and crept up on foot behind the Frenchman, watching his chance.

The four came swiftly, but reined in as they drew close to avoid their comrades' error. They would take their time, careful not to block one another's assaults. Their enemy's sword-play was such as they had never seen. They knew themselves for mere butchers, broken men-at-arms.

As Pierre's edge swept the head from a comrade's shoulders they closed in; two in front, one on each flank.

He that was unhorsed thrust from behind, but Pierre turned on him, struck, and faced round again swiftly. His blow had fallen short; he had but cut away his foe's nasal. He engaged two at once, the blows that passed his shield turning on his practised guard.

"Watch your rear!" came a shout from the glade.

The captive by the pool was free, and running for the horse at whose saddle his captured weapons were lashed. The groom, released by the fight, had taken heart of grace to cut his companion's bonds.

Pierre guarded his rear by advancing. His spurs shot home and the white horse leaped forward, just as the fellow who lurked on foot slashed at its belly. The leap saved horse and rider, and bore Pierre hurtling against the two in front. Three

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lightning thrusts, a whirling shoulder-stroke, and Pierre's sword clove an adversary through skull and chin.

But the second man, thrusting even as Pierre's arm rose, drew blood from his armpit. Before the fellow could strike again, Pierre feinted for his throat, turned swiftly and cut down the ruffian on his right. In that instant, overjoyed at the opening granted him, the rascal still before Pierre whirled up his weapon—and toppled from his horse, six inches of steel in his back.

With a wild cry of dismay the two surviving ruffians made for the woods. He who was horsed vanished in three bounds; the other leaped to the saddle of a stricken comrade's mount and followed, fumbling to loosen a cased bow by his saddle. Scorning pursuit of beaten men, Pierre grinned down at the young man whose release had saved him from a dangerous plight, and drew deep breaths into his laboring lungs.

"Your groom—did his work—well!" he panted, pointing across the glade.

The servant was even now drawing the sacks off the two who still lay bound where the bandits had flung them. But the young man—who was indeed a mere boy—paid no heed to his words. He was striving to lift up the bandit who had been thrown by the white charger's first impact, and who still huddled, half-crushed, under his beast. Even as he got the fellow partly free and raised him by the shoulders, a loud twang bit the still air. An arrow bored through the bandit's breast.

The boy shook his fists at the sky.

"It is always thus!" he roared in anger. "Shall I never take one of these swine alive?"

"Nay, what need?" Pierre asked. "They are better dead. You are in luck, young sir. That arrow was meant for you."

"Not for me, dolt!" the lad retorted. "If your wits were greater, your tongue would clack less. Ride after him who shot, and drag him here by the heels!"

The unmerited insult whipped the blood to Pierre's cheeks; but he obeyed for the reason that if a hostile bowman lurked in the forest it was wise to catch him before he did more harm. For twenty minutes he scoured the neighboring forest, finding nothing. At last he returned to the glade, remembering the cut on his charger's rump which must be cared for. As he rode into the clearing, the youth raised his recovered horn to his lips and blew a long blast. Faint and far, a second horn returned the signal.

ALL three of the rescued were now unbound. They were all men of striking presence—the boy as much as the others, for all his scant eighteen years. He was of middle height but of Herculean frame with rough red hair and hot hazel eyes. By his side stood a tall, thick-set man of Pierre's own age, big jawed, with dark hair and a smart hawk-like face. His square shoulders and sure poise marked him a soldier, as his thick, twanging accent proved him as Englishman.

But the sight of the third drew from Pierre a cry of joy.

"By St. Sernin!" he shouted. "Cercamon!"

The man turned in a flash. His eyes gleamed with happy recognition. He was short, with amazing breadth of shoulder, a smooth face fair as a woman's, and sharp, blue-green eyes. Long, loose locks hung down over his silken collar, which was half-torn from his white neck.

"Pierre!" he exclaimed. "Pierre Faidit! What do you in Normandy, old war-wolf?"

Pierre's face glowed. He had found once more the friend whom, next to his dead master, he most loved. Cercamon the troubadour, gallant soldier, noble poet and trusted favorite of Count Raymond-Bérenger of Barcelona, had crossed Pierre's path but twice; yet their hearts had gone out to each other.

Once the troubadour had saved Pierre from death by a treacherous hand; the second meeting had brought them to Spain together as comrades in arms. A perilous venture, they had shared both danger and renown.

It was four years since then. Pierre had heard that after Count Raymond's death Cercamon had sought another patron; but he had not known where.

They clasped hands warmly, then Pierre slipped from his saddle to examine his horse's hurt. He gave no notice to the boy, turning his back full on him. Thus he failed to see the dark scowl on that youngster's face. The boy hailed him gruffly; but Pierre, still smarting from his earlier insult, paid no heed. His horse was his comrade; this hot-tempered young man with the Plantagenet badge had no claim on him.

"Steel spurs—not gold!" the boy growled

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at Pierre's heels. "A soldier then, or a squire—no knight. Ha, fellow! Give ear when your betters speak!"

Pierre faced about, twin points of fire glittering under knit brows.

"My betters?" he repeated softly. "Am I, who serve no man, worse than you, who serve Plantagenet? You, who need my help to cope with a handful of varlets? Let me see to my beast, who is perchance a better man than you!"

"Pierre! Blood of Heaven!" cried the troubadour in tones of horror. "Be careful, man! You speak to the Duke of Normandy!"

In hot confusion Pierre fell on one knee.

"Your pardon, lord!" he implored with all due earnestness. "But indeed my horse is hurt and needs care."

The young duke glared at him. Though Pierre was greatly disturbed at his rudeness to one so high—the one, indeed, whom he had come to serve—he met the angry eyes fairly.

"Étienne will see to the beast," the duke answered coldly. "He is a master-leech. Now, fellow, if your name is indeed Pierre Faidit and you are a masterless man, how come you to be lolloping through my forest without leave?"

Pierre rose, and gazed at the wrathful lad. He seemed a spoiled child, this young duke whose exploits had filled France with his fame. His hazel eyes flashed the storm-signals of an ungovernable temper.

Pierre remembered the saying that Henry of Normandy rushed into deeds which his father, cunning Geoffrey of Anjou, prudently avoided; and that his victories owed more to reckless dash and brute force than to strategy. The age was one in which greatness depended more on brawn than on wit.

The man with English voice and face laid a hand on the duke's shoulder. The lad, touchy as he seemed, did not resent this man's familiarity.

"Give thanks to God," the Englishman said, "that the stranger came to our help, my lord. And give some thanks to him."

"So I would, Thomas," Henry muttered, "had he spoken me fairly. If he came to our aid, I also came to his when he was within an inch of purgatory."

"It is so, my lord," Pierre confessed. "I pray you pardon my rough tongue."

Henry turned square away from him and for some minutes maintained a glowering silence, hanging his head and tearing at his nails. At length he swung about, a smile struggling through his clouded features. He reached out a hand to Pierre, who would have kissed it; but the duke crushed his fingers in a grip of iron. Pride moved the Frenchman to put his own strength into the hand-clasp, and soon Henry's fingers went limp.

"Before ——!" the Norman roared. "Had I a clutch like yours I would squeeze the world dry in my fingers! Who are you? Are you truly Pierre Faidit, with whose skill in war France rings?"

Pierre bowed.

"Whom men call Pierre de l'Éspée—Pierre of the Sword? Aye? Then you are masterless no longer, if you will follow my banner. But guard your speech hereafter, for—*gloire de Dieu!*—no man shall bandy words or glances with me as you have done. How say you? Will you take my wage?"

"Gladly, lord duke. For that purpose I came to Normandy."

Though he guarded his dignity with jealous wrath, Henry could fling it away like the boy he was. He clapped Pierre on the shoulder and grinned wide.

"Then you shall see rare deeds of arms. My fortune is young, but it mounts—it mounts! I am count and duke now, thanks to my sword, and my father's indolence, who thinks to do with my right hand what he dares not do with his own. Before I am your age I shall wear a crown!"

"England's crown waits for you, sire," Thomas spoke with warm feeling. "You have but to wrench it from the usurper Stephen."

"Nay, but I will have France too!" the duke boasted. "You shall help me take it, you lads."

Pierre shook his head.

"Not I, gracious lord," he answered. "I am Frenchman born, and never will I serve against the land that nourished me. Against England, aye—against all the world! Never against France!"

Henry Plantagenet flew into rage once more.

"Why, here is a riddle! This fellow will serve me, and he will not! He will make conditions, forsooth! If all my men served me so, how should I prosper? I will take you on my own terms, or not at all! Will you march with me against France, or go your way with the curse of twenty devils?"

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Turning on his heel, Pierre strode to his horse, which stood quiet under the tender ministrations of the groom.

"I thank you," he said gently. "The beast will do well enough now, till I can reach the first town beyond the Norman border."

Cercamon was at Henry's feet.

"My lord, my lord!" he implored. "Send him not away! Let him stay on his own terms! He has the strength of five men, the wisdom of twenty clerks, the loyalty of an angel! He can handle a troop of hard-bitten riders better than any captain west of the Rhine. If you let him go, you lose what gold can not buy! Bethink you, lest he take service under your enemies!"

The Englishman also was pleading with the stubborn boy, but more calmly:

"Your life is worth more than your anger, Henry, and this man has saved your life. Your temper will cost you a kingdom some day!"

"It will cost you your life some day, Thomas Becket!" the duke flared.

But in that flare his anger seemed to die. Pierre's foot had slipped into the stirrup when Henry called to him:

"Ha, Faidit! Will you make a bargain with me?"

The Frenchman mounted before he answered—

"What sort of bargain, your Grace?"

"I need good men-at-arms too sorely to turn away such as you. I will give you a troop, and promise never to use you against France—if you will prove your worth by undertaking a dangerous enterprise for me."

Gravely Pierre dismounted.

"Anything, my lord!" he said.

The sound of many hoofs and voices broke in upon their speech. A score of riders burst into the glade, pulled up at sight of the dead men and cried out in consternation.

The foremost hastened forward with a white face. He was a richly dressed, swaggering knight whose scarlet cloak fluttered above fine mail. His brow was low and broad, his pale features arrogantly handsome. His hands glittered with jeweled rings.

"You are safe, my lord?" he gasped.

"Safe enough, Odo. You were far away when my horn summoned you."

"Your Grace bade us leave you in the glade," the knight answered. "We could only obey."

Henry nodded curtly.

"So I did. I wished to speak privately with Thomas and Cercamon. See yonder dead dogs! The old story!"

The horsemen—tall, lean men, haughty of eye and scarred with service—stared in astonishment at the dead bandits.

Henry pointed to Pierre.

"His work. He is Pierre of the Sword. Up all, and home!"

THE duke's hunting-seat was an old, square-towered castle on the Col Rouge, the highest of all the rolling hills that formed the district of Perche. Col Castle was scarred and ugly, but large enough to house the thirty knights, four-and-twenty ladies and three hundred men-at-arms that formed the holiday court. Henry was still prone to pass the hot weather in sport, being still young enough to think that crowns may be won and held by the sword alone, and not by constant travail of mind.

The torches were lit in the great hall, and cressets filled with pine-knots flared in the open court. Along the bailey walls in long rows of wood huts that lined the inner face of the court, ate and slept and diced and bickered the soldiers of the garrison. At supper now, their rude jests and laughter rose noisily above the reek of stew-pots and drifted in gusts into the great hall where their betters dined more decorously.

The under-officers and the castle servants, all but the kitchen-knaves and waiting-varlets, had a long, low table on trestles within the hall. Above this on a raised dais dined the ducal household—knights, ladies, Henry, the duke and his mother, the Empress Mathilde.

Thomas the Englishman and Cercamon were there. Thomas was the duke's friend, now on a mission to him from the Archbishop of Canterbury, whom Thomas served as secretary. As for Cercamon, the troubadour may always claim equality with princes. Art, when it is great, levels all barriers.

But Pierre was not so honored. He sat at the lower table with other captains, a minstrel or two and the steward. He was at home among them and friendly to their station, not forgetting the time he himself had served as a common man-at-arms. Though his renown had won him companionship and some favors from the great,

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yet he did not disdain to mingle with men whose daily toils and daily pleasures, whose few ambitions and rough needs, were as familiar to him as the garments he wore.

As he sat there, however, he remembered—could not help remembering—that Alphonse-Jourdain, his old master, would have invited him up to the dais, to eat with the household. The Count of Toulouse had valued Pierre's devotion and counsel more than the fripperies of rank. But new service, new manners. Pierre was not cast down.

Cercamon sent many a quick troubled look at his friend, and at last had the hardihood to speak his thoughts to the duke.

"What?" boomed Henry. "With us? A man of no rank?"

"Aye," Cercamon insisted. "Or I go down to him. He is my friend, and worthier to sit here than I."

He shot a glance at Pierre, whose rising color showed he had heard the duke's haughty protest.

So it came to pass that by a friend's love Pierre was translated to a seat at the duke's own table. Now he was indeed uncomfortable, knowing he was but half-wanted. The sewer waved him to his new place in scandalized silence. Here were rich food and luscious wines instead of the cold mutton and ale set before the soldiers. He ate in silence, glad that these proud folk had little to say to him, anxious for the meal's end.

But in a little while he was forced into the talk, and then felt more at ease. He had eaten at princes' tables before. Henry, more gracious with the wine, drew him out on a point of fortification.

"What think you of my engines, Pierre?" he asked. "Those Sir Odo showed you on the battlements?"

"The catapults have been badly cared for, lord duke," he answered. "The sinews should have been oiled, not greased. I fear they will be too slack."

"I will speak of it to Odo," Henry remarked carelessly. "There has been no war here in my time. I look after my spears better, for I need them all the time."

The Empress Mathilde looked up from the trencher of dry bread that served her for a plate.

"It was lack of care for our engines that lost us Oxford," she said. "I have told you that often, my son."

Pierre stole a respectful glance at this formidable lady. She was a stern, bitter woman of fifty, dark-featured, with the remains of a youthful beauty that had been famous. To her first husband, the German Emperor, she had borne no children; Henry was her one child by her second husband, Geoffrey of Anjou, overlord of Britanny and Normandy.

All Europe had heard of her brave ventures in England. Daughter of King Henry I, she had herself led a Norman army against King Stephen eleven years before. For a while victorious, she had at last been penned in Oxford by Stephen's barons and forced to flee by stealth for her life. Yet for nine years she had held half of England, and held it bravely.

In her turn she stared at Pierre, but openly and bluntly, as if to learn what manner of man this was who had slain six outlaws in the forest with his single hand and saved her son from captivity—perhaps from death. It was for this son that she had risked that daring invasion of England, when he was still too young to fight for the crown she coveted for him.

Question after question the duke hurled at his new follower, seeking to probe the extent of his military knowledge, yet only revealing his own inexperience. Henry was still only a hand-fighter; he had not, as had Pierre, served in half the provinces of France, or in the Holy Land. And when the last of nine courses had been nibbled—for the Normans were a temperate folk—the empress' eyes were sparkling.

"Here is a man who knows war!" she said to her son. "It is in my mind, Henry, that you should trust him and heed his word. He has served with men whose brains are worth more than both your arms."

"We shall see," the duke replied. "Much will depend on the outcome of a task I set him. Guillaume the Faceless——"

The old woman clapped a bony hand over the duke's mouth.

"Not a word of that!" she warned him. "I have told you that there are men of your own court in league with Guillaume. If it were not so he would never guess your orders as he does. The less said of him the better!"

"My men are as faithful as most," Henry grumbled impatiently; but his mother only smiled a bitter smile.

"When you are as old as I am," she said, "you will know that few men are faithful. Gold will buy honor six days out of the seven. No more of this matter, Henry."

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"But this Pierre's eyes are honest, and his lips clean-lined. Watch men's lips, Henry. What think you, Thomas?"

The Englishman ran his slow gaze over Pierre's face.

"I trust him," he answered.

"And I," cried Cercamon, "will vouch for his honor with my life!"

"Vouch for your own!" snapped Mathilde. "Pierre, I see, does not eye the pretty women as you do. Gold will not buy you, troubadour; but I would not trust you far with a lovely face— Here are the water and towels, Henry."

One by one the company washed lips and fingers at the ewers passed by servants; then all rose.

"HOW like you the duke's tongue?" Pierre smiled at the Englishman's question.

"Very little. In my province every man is courteous till he draws sword."

He sat on his cot in a chamber high in the square tower. The torches gleamed in the wall-brackets, but the moonlight flooding in through an arrow-slot made them pale. Beside him sat Cercamon, newcome from singing before the empress; Thomas Becket lay stretched out on a chest of arms.

Thomas laughed.

"Henry speaks out whatever is in his mind. Half his words he rues bitterly as soon as said; the other half he will make good in the face of —— itself. Henry is a boy, but he is also the bravest man I have ever seen. Stupid he is; but it is the mere slowness of growing youth. When his frame has reached its fulness his brain will grow to match it. Not for nothing is he the son of Geoffrey the Fox and Mathilde the Lioness. He has gleams of wit even now."

"Thanks for your praise!" boomed a voice in the doorway.

Pierre and Cercamon leaped to their feet in dismay. Becket, knowing the duke's moods better, merely swung his feet to the floor and calmly regarded him. Henry roared his amusement.

"You judge me truly, Thomas. But now get out, you and Cercamon. I would speak with Pierre alone."

It seemed to the troubadour, as he backed from the duke's presence, that there was a touch of malice on the boy's lips. He caught Becket's eye; and the Englishman nodded as the hanging fell behind him.

"Sit, Faidit!"

The duke's eyes scrutinized Pierre's searchingly; then he said without preface:

"You are to rid all this district of outlaws. I have tried, and my hand is heavy; yet I have failed."

Pierre showed his astonishment. The master of Normandy, Anjou, and Britanny, powerful beyond all princes of the North, was unable to keep order within his own borders! It was incredible. Henry's men-at-arms were the best in the world. How could a horde of thieves defy him?

"The Perche Forest," Henry resumed, "lies in the heart of Normandy. Within it are fifty villages and two market-towns; in the plains to the south and east are rich monasteries, churches and prosperous cities. All that rich country pays tribute to a nest of outlaws that lurk somewhere in the wild forest. I can not crush them, for I can not learn their rendezvous. Without that knowledge I am powerless."

"Captives?" Pierre suggested.

"Aye, captives! If we could take prisoners and keep them alive long enough to question them, we could lay our hands on their nest. But they will not stand up to us in pitched battle; they show clean heels. They can buy or steal swifter horses than I can afford. My moneys are low, what with my wars and the expense of my court; and the thieves are swollen with the loot of all my countryside."

"But you must have captured a few?"

"Few indeed," the duke growled. "Seven in the last year. Until a month ago I left the affair to Odo de Montvoisin, my seneschal, whose business it is to put down strong thieves within my marches. But his raids are useless. In the whole year he has taken but three men. They guess his movements before he stirs, and strike back when our guard is relaxed.

"Not a prisoner has lived long enough to confess. One was slain as was the fellow in the wood today—shot from ambush; another was poisoned in his cell; the third was stabbed even as his guards led him—it was by night—within the castle gate. They let no one escape to betray them.

"At last I myself rode out in pursuit of them, with my own household troops. They had just sacked an abbey near Evreux. One of the monks escaped unseen, and brought the news to me. I had my men in full chase five minutes after the monk

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gasped out his story. I came upon the thieves in the open plain, forty of them, laden with booty. I slew fourteen, took four, and put the rest to flight.

"But as we returned with our prisoners we passed close by the forest where a dozen peasants were mending the road. These fled as we drew nigh, as peasants always flee before armed men. A moment after, a volley of arrows tore through the skirt of the wood, and down fell all four of our captives, riddled with shafts. It is always so—either we take no prisoners, or those we take are slain before they can be forced to betray their fellows."

"And today they attacked you," Pierre mused. "They have secret knowledge of your movements, and you can not learn theirs. I should think every village, every honest peasant, would play the spy for you. One swift-footed refugee could bring you word of their position shortly after the bandits attacked his village."

"Think you I have not questioned the peasants?"

Henry's cheeks flushed with impatience.

"If the country folk would report the outlaws' raids, I could hunt them down; or, by mapping the region with the towns most plundered, could find the center from which they conduct their inroads. But I can trace no common center, nor will the peasants complain of them.

"The thieves have put so strong a fear on the countryside that no man dares speak of them. I have ridden into a village blood-stained and charred, where the poor folk stood with glaring eyes, cursing the bandits till I questioned them. Then they swore there were no bandits, and that the blood and corpses were caused by a brawl among themselves.

"There is a legend that the bandit leader is a devil, who will tear to pieces any who inform on him. He is called Guillaume the Faceless. This is folly. Against devils I can hire priests. It shows only that he is cunning enough to be a master rascal, and merciless enough to inspire greater terror than I can."

"Some man in your confidence," Pierre pondered, "some one of your household, must be in their pay. Otherwise they could not know your plans."

"So my mother says. They guess our movements with the fiend's own cunning. You yourself saw, this day, how a handful of them laid hands on my own person. Never before have I strayed so far from my men; yet they knew where and when to find me unescorted. They fell on the three of us while we sat by the spring and talked."

"They would have slain you," Pierre mused, "and been free from pursuit forever."

"They are not such fools! They would have carried off Thomas and Cercamon—whom of all men I value most—for ransom, and made me pay for their release. Slay me, ha? They want me to live. Me, with my hard hand and stupid brain—for Thomas speaks truly of me—me they can outwit and befool. If they harmed me or held me captive, my father would once more take over the ducal throne. These outlaws fear the brain of shrewd old Geoffrey more than the hand of his son. While I live and reign, they think themselves free to plunder safely."

"What is needed," Pierre spoke, "is a man they do not know—who is not known to hold your commission, but who holds authority."

Henry laughed.

"That is it! You have come in the very moment of time! I will give you authority, such men as you need, and all the time you ask. But no man must know that you are in this business."

"It is already known that I am with you," Pierre objected, "and tonight at table you spoke of Guillaume the Faceless. You should give orders that will seem to send me out of the district, and let me come back secretly to ride against the outlaws."

The duke nodded.

"So be it. From now on I shall say no more of the matter. You shall have all you ask, when you ask it. But—on your success depends all your future with me!"

"Give me a week here with the court," Pierre requested. "If at any time I disappear, say you have sent me on an embassy to Paris."

THE Summer night was breathlessly hot, the woods sultry. Black darkness hid the dust, but Pierre could smell it and taste it on his hot tongue. It rose in choking clouds about his horse's flanks. The lining of his armor was sticky on his back.

Eight days ago he had left Col Rouge, after a week's apparent idleness there. He

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had slid down from the battlements on a rope while Becket held the sentinel in talk. Pierre was not wearing his own armor, for he was certain that the hidden traitor in the court had already sent his description to the outlaw chief. Cercamon had procured him coarse mail, such as any man-at-arms in a poor service might wear, and a sword that though plain was of good steel.

It was the troubadour also who had by some devious means found him a tattered old cloak, and seen that an uncouth, sturdy nag was tethered at the edge of the forest. Pierre felt sure of his disguise: any one would have taken him for a broken soldier ready for any service—the more desperate the better. To foster this illusion he let his beard grow, and went as unwashed as his fastidious soul would allow.

Eight days he had wandered through the forest, following a map furnished by the duke, taking care not to keep too direct a route. From village to village, town to town he had gone, in and about the forest, his eyes and ears open for the slightest hint of unrest. He did not believe he would find the bandit headquarters in the wood itself, but rather that the forest furnished an easy means of baffling the duke's pursuit.

Their den must offer a secure hiding-place for men, horses and plunder—and there must be much of all three. The forest with its isolated, helpless villages seemed to him the spider's web rather than its hole. With the duke's rangers riding through it, the duke's court hunting its coverts for deer, heron and pheasant, the forest could not conceal so large a hiding-place as the bandits needed.

It was likelier that they would make their quarters in a town. There they could lie snug, lodging one by one in many houses, and hide their booty in some dwelling hired under the cloak of honest tenancy. Pierre remembered the thieves of Toul, who had quartered themselves among the burghers, at safely scattered intervals. By day they passed as artisans or apprentices; by night they met in an old house rented by their leader, who was esteemed a mercer. Then there was the band of Evry-le-Chanoun, in league with the townsmen, so that Evry waxed disreputably prosperous. When they were broken up, thirty townsmen had been hanged for complicity.

So Pierre rode through the thick forest perfunctorily, but he examined the villages with a watchful eye. He had already made a circle through the infested district town by town, scrutinizing the faces and dress of the people, but talking little with them. Any village which had dealings with the robbers would be less tolerant of strangers, more suspicious and prosperous, than honest folk.

He haunted the taverns, using lips less than eyes. Yet he bought drink, sipping it slowly in a corner, straining his ears for any suspicious words dropped by farmers, stray soldiers, or common idlers. He had been at pains to talk much with parish priests. These eyed him askance, for he looked like a ruffian in his disguise. Yet sooner or later they talked, for he had a persuasive tongue, and a lonely priest hungers to gossip.

But in all this time he had learned nothing. He had seen a few ugly characters, heard a few casual words that might mean much or nothing; but he had no evidence—not a sign that thieves dwelt anywhere about. Now and then a countryman would bemoan the loss of cattle or goods—but always guardedly, with a fear that proved his honesty.

The circle he had been drawing about the Perche was almost closed. He was confident nothing had escaped him, and he held high hopes that the last arc of the circle would yield results. On this ninth night, therefore, he rode along a rutted forest way toward the next village—the straggling hamlet of Maison Morte. Even now he could see its first lights twinkling among the trees.

It was getting late; the lights would be extinguished soon. His horse, scenting food, quickened its pace. Pierre rode out of the wood, caught the wind-blown scent of hay and let his beast carry him down the one long street to the inn.

In the dark at least he saw no signs that Maison Morte had suffered from bandit raids. Daylight might show more; but in three other villages there had been no mark of violence. The robbers had indeed a canny leader, who left no sign to show he favored one place more than all others.

The inn at Maison Morte was a wretched hovel—a single room, with walls of wattle and daub, its hot thatch dripping dirt. A single spitting torch fitfully revealed the filth of the reeds that strewed the dirt floor. Benches ran along two walls and cumbered the floor-space; a single table was

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cluttered with odds and ends of a mean meal. Wine-skins and jars lay heaped in one corner, over which the greasy host—a fat man of middle age, with one sullen eye—kept surly watch.

Three guests were drinking, seated close together on one of the benches. Pierre took another, feeling all eyes focus on his face. He met them with a menacing glare, in character with his disguise. One after another, the drinkers dropped their eyes and looked away.

They were ordinary country folk, in rough slip-overs and galligaskins. Apart from their brutal faces, nothing about them merited a second glance. The French peasant, in the hard old feudal age, must needs be hard and rough to live. For an hour Pierre watched them covertly, till one by one they rose and departed. A little longer he stayed, sipping the vile ale that furnished his sole pretext for lingering.

"A bed for the night?" he questioned.

The innkeeper measured him with a long look, and pointed to the rushes in the corner. Pierre shook his head.

"It is better in the wood," he said.

"As good as you have slept there," the host retorted. "It is but two sols, with one for your horse's bed and fodder, and one for the drink."

Pierre tossed him two coppers to pay for the ale and his beast's hay.

"I sleep in the wood," he answered. "I have no more money."

This was not true, but he wished to pass for a penniless, desperate man. He cherished a hope that the outlaws might hear of his presence, take him for what he seemed, and approach him with offers to make him one of them.

Riding slowly back to the forest, Pierre paused at the end of the last mowed field. The nearest house was close by the forest. He rode on in the dark till the murmuring of a woodland stream guided him to his night's quarters. Letting the horse drink, he knelt down, washed the nasty taste of the ale from his throat and tethered the beast. In a moment he was wrapped in the soldier's sleep, that sound slumber from which a man wakes at the softest step.

IT WAS dawn when he woke. Leading his horse to the last fringe of trees, Pierre looked out upon Maison Morte by day. It bore no sign of pillage, and indeed looked too poor to tempt violence. Nothing he could see gave the faintest trace of what he sought. It was a mere hamlet of scattered, tumble-down hovels, with fields retrieved from the forest. A few lean cattle cropped the mown stubble; a few starveling chickens scavenged the road.

On the left, nearing the wood, the houses ran in a crazy line toward a great hill, some nine hundred feet high, which on the town side was broken by a sheer precipice. The house closest to the forest, which was the one solid structure, was built against the face of the cliff. It was larger than the rest—perhaps the dwelling of the local money-lender, the parasite that leached from the peasants all that their overlords spared.

A woman came out with a reed broom, and began sweeping away the dust that lay thick on the threshold. Pierre noticed that the house was built on a flat, rocky outcrop that made a natural platform running out quite thirty feet from the road. It was this platform that the woman's vigorous strokes were cleaning.

Maison Morte had not even a village church. It was the meanest, most hopeless spot Pierre had found in what was otherwise a fairly rich country. He was sure it held nothing for him. A breakfast of smoked meat and an early apple from his lean saddle-bags raised his spirits a little, and he rode away for the next village.

The morning was fresh; but after four miles of dusty wood-road Pierre found its glory tarnished. All about him towered huge trunks that had never felt the ax; the birds chattered as if man had never disturbed them.

It was neither sight nor sound that warned him of the stranger's approach. He heard nothing till a jay flew screaming overhead. Another moment, and a mailed man rode toward him around a bend. This was curious: deep in dust as the road was, there were stones enough for shod hoofs to clink on. Yet here was the man, and his mount ambled on noiselessly.

He was a big man, hulking and ugly-looking. A bow was slung behind him and a great sword hung by his side. He pulled up, looked Pierre over out of evil eyes and grinned.

"Your last service paid you ill," he remarked, noting Pierre's tattered cloak and unkempt mount.

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Pierre nodded, affecting surliness.

"My last service paid me blows and a thankless discharge," he growled.

The stranger grinned again.

"Duke Henry is a generous master," he suggested.

Pierre cursed, and spat.

"Generous with hard names," he said; and this was true. "How can a broken soldier get service with the like of him, with no good conduct to show?"

He watched the stranger's face from the corners of his eyes. Pierre knew well that no mailed man who wore no badge of service could be a follower of Henry's. This man might not be an outlaw, but Pierre thought the chances were against his being honest. He was at least an armed vagabond, or a discharged soldier; therefore Pierre assumed the same rôle.

"Have you money?" the stranger countered.

Pierre snarled at him.

"I would twist your neck for a copper! I am hungry, and my beast too."

Once more the man's eyes ran him over from head to foot, noting the two weeks' beard, the desperate look, the power of arm and breadth of shoulder.

"You are a pretty fellow," the stranger said at length. "I serve one who needs such as you. You need never want for food, drink, raiment, pleasure, or—gold. Much gold!"

He paused, and his wicked little eyes leered at Pierre.

Pierre's heart leaped. It was for this that he played the rôle of cast soldier. This master of masterless men could be none other than his quarry, the outlaw chief.

"Take me to this prince of masters!" he cried.

"That must march slowly," the bandit answered with a cunning look. "We show no man where we nest till we are sure of him. Ride on with me, and I will tell you what you must do to enter our fellowship."

Wheeling his horse, Pierre followed the man down the road for the greater part of a mile. The bandit spoke little, and that little was the repetition of promises of the great fortune Pierre would make by throwing in his lot with the unknown master. By and by the man drew off into a clump of undergrowth where the great trees receded.

"Follow!" he commanded. "The path is hidden."

Hidden it was. The shrubbery concealed its entrance well. Once within, they were utterly shut off from the road. Pierre was disappointed, for this could be no every-day route of the outlaws. The passage of many men would have broken down the masking bushes, and tramped the damp path deep in mud. There were but few hoof-prints, and those blurred in some way that Pierre did not at first understand. Shod hoofs would have bitten deep into the mud, leaving clear outlines; nor were these the prints of unshod hoofs either.

The path ran through the second growth for a time, marking what must once have been a road, and opened out into a little clearing. At the farther end there was a moss-grown shrine. The stranger halted.

"We trust no man untested," he said. "Mark yonder shrine. You must be here one hour before sunset tomorrow, ready to ride on a venture that will show us your pith. Say nothing to any man, or—big as you are—you will not see another sun!"

"But how," Pierre retorted, "am I to eat meanwhile?"

"Here is money."

The stranger tossed him a gold-piece.

"Bite on that! It is an earnest of your future wage."

Pierre tried to counterfeit greedy rapture; then, with a cunning thought, he laid a hand on his sword, crying—

"Give me more, or I take it!"

"You must fight for it then!"

The fellow drew sword, his mean lips curled in a smile of confidence. But Pierre dismounted, for he knew not the quality of his horse in a fight. The other also sprang from the saddle, as if less minded to kill Pierre than to try his sword-play.

From the first clash Pierre knew himself the man's master, but he recognized also that his antagonist was a better swordsman than most men-at-arms. Therefore he dissembled his own great skill, swinging wide and lunging short, parrying coarsely, barely holding the vantage. But it was enough; within five minutes the other sprang back, crying for quarter.

"You will get a thousand times more gold by joining us than by robbing me!" he gasped.

Pierre sheathed his weapon.

"You had done better to say so in the beginning!"

"I thought myself a better man than

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you," the rascal replied. "Fire of the pit! Our captain will give a brave welcome to such a swordsman—tomorrow, before sundown!"

While he yet spoke he mounted, gave his horse the spurs and vanished in the undergrowth. Pierre did not try to follow. The first bounds of the stranger's beast proved it a marvel of horse-flesh.

"Thank God!" Pierre muttered. "I am on the right road!"

Retracing the path to the highway, he jogged along for an hour toward the next village, then—after scanning the road in both directions—turned into the forest and put his beast to the gallop between the rows of great trees. His head was turned for Col Rouge. Every detail of the clearing was etched into his memory.

CERCAMON could indulge his whims unquestioned. He was a soldier, the duke's friend and a Southerner. Every North Frenchman expects a Southerner to do strange things. So it caused little talk when Cercamon won Henry's permission to relieve the sentry on the east wall of the tower, and to stand watch there from the second hour after dark till the third, every night of Pierre's absence. Under his cloak the troubadour carried a coiled rope, stout, and knotted at short intervals.

On the tenth night after Pierre's departure Cercamon heard a shrill whistle and saw the rope pulled out taut from the merlon to which he had made it fast. For safety's sake, he drew sword, and waited. But he sheathed the blade when Pierre crawled over the battlements.

"You have succeeded?" he whispered.

"I know not," Pierre answered softly. "I must see the duke."

Cercamon unfastened the rope, wound it round his waist and draped his cloak over it.

"Crouch in the gloom of the wall," he cautioned. "Wait here till I return."

It would be hard to smuggle Pierre past the men on guard at the stair-head—one of whom might be in the bandits' pay. Much better to bring the duke to him. So Pierre kept in the dark of the merlons till steps sounded on the flags, and Cercamon returned with Henry. As Pierre rose up like a ghost the duke started back.

"You!" he gasped. "How did you get within the walls?"

"Over them," Pierre answered.

Swiftly, in guarded whispers, he told of his long, close search for traces of the outlaws, and of his rendezvous with the stranger for the following evening.

"It is our chance to find their nest," he concluded. "Give me twenty archers and twoscore men-at-arms on good horses. Let them be called now, with no hint of the work before them, to the gate. I will wait well outside, where I can watch them as they come; Cercamon shall bring up the rear. Thus, if any are spies of Guillaume the Faceless, none of them can escape to warn him. We must march in half an hour!"

"I will go too!" Henry whispered eagerly.

"With your indulgence, my lord, it can not be," Pierre insisted. "When the huntsman has sighted the quarry, shall another frighten it away before he can shoot?"

The young duke drew Pierre to him, seeking his eyes in the darkness.

"I am taking great chances with you!" he warned. "Play me fair, or by God's justice, it will go ill with you!"

"If I fail my neck is yours," Pierre answered grimly.

Lest any of his officers, unknown to him, should be in league with the outlaws and so betray him, Henry himself picked the men for the ambuscade. All from his own body-guard, Normans and Angevins of massive frame and long service, they were routed out singly and sent to the gate. One by one he caught them on guard, or in their beds, laid a stern hand on the shoulder of each, bade him arm and drove him forth.

Then to the stables where the startled grooms leaped up sleepy-eyed to water three score and two horses, saddle them and lead them out. A challenge rang from the tower and Henry's own voice thundered back:

"Duke's service! Uprising in Caen! Mind your posts!"

For by Pierre's counsel he furnished a pretext that would set Guillaume's spies working in the wrong direction. Caen lies northwest of Col Rouge; Pierre was to ride south and east. The wondering men-at-arms mounted their beasts, staring at the dark figure by Henry's side.

"Ye take orders from Pierre Faidit," the duke rumbled. "If any of you disobey him, ye shall boil in pitch when I catch you!"

They knew he would be as good as his word.

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Cercamon rode up from the rear, and handed Pierre a sword.

"Your own weapon will sit best in your hand," he said. "I fetched it from your chamber, with a cover to hide the jeweled hilt. When time comes to strike, you can snatch off the cover and know a friend is in your fingers."

"And a friend by my side this night!" Pierre answered, clasping the troubadour's hand.

Direct through the forest, it was but half a night's ride to the shrine of the rendezvous. Each man carried provisions in his saddle-bags. They rode on slowly in the dark, each following the loom of his shoulders who rode before, close, to avoid straggling. Cercamon was again in the rear. No secret traitor would get past him; but Pierre ran the chance of a lateral dash into the dark forest-aisles. So, lest a spy in mid-column get away to give the alarm, he gave orders that any man who left his place be struck down by those nearest him.

AFTER some hours they came out on the road midway between Maison Morte and Queraille. Here Pierre halted them, and bade them camp, fireless, just within trees. If any midnight rider came down that road, they must seize him.

But no one came, the night through. At dawn the men were ordered to efface their tracks where they had ridden into the road, by dragging the dust with broken fronds, and then to hide the fronds. Meantime he searched diligently for the hidden opening that gave on the path to the shrine; while Cercamon kept a wary eye on the troopers. When Pierre returned the troubadour reported exultantly:

"All here! There are no traitors in Henry's body-guard!"

After finding the path Pierre skirted the wood on either side till he discovered—where the old clearing ceased and the great forest growth resumed—a way that would take them around the clearing. The troopers followed him into the wood, all but six archers and fifteen men-at-arms whom he placed in ambush among the trees across the road from the entrance to the path.

He had now laid a trap where such outlaws as came to the rendezvous with him must enter; it remained to surround the clearing. This he did, throwing out a thin screen of archers just within the bush all around, and posting double their number of men-at-arms behind. The archers had their bows ready and their quivers hitched to the front.

One by one he let his men lead their horses to drink, and slake their own thirst. The sun rose just before the last returned with his beast from the brook and took up his position.

Now began the long wait. It had been unnecessary perhaps to reach the spot so early. The evil-faced stranger had set the time for the meeting at an hour before sundown. But it had been most needful to bring up his men and post them earlier than any bandit scouts could be stirring; and the men were comfortable enough here.

The stranger might come with a company; more probably he would come alone, to guide Pierre to the bandit headquarters. But others might come with him; and Pierre was determined to take prisoner as many as might come, to force them to betray their fellows and to ride at once against the main outlaw force with his captives as guides.

It was a pretty ambuscade, but it had one necessary weakness: Pierre could post by the entrance to the path only as many men as the trees by the road would hide. Yet there was small chance that enough bandits would come to force a way out through the score he had posted there.

The long hours passed; the men began to grow restless. Their horses were tethered just behind them. Each man had orders, when they should hear the approach of horses, to pinch the nostrils of their own beasts, lest their neighing betray the trap. The signal for attack would be a blast from Pierre's horn, which he wore under his tattered cloak.

AT LAST the sun sank so low that the trees shut it from sight. A general tension spread over the hidden watchers. A slight haze rose among the trees; then, as Pierre rode out to the moss-grown shrine, a horseman appeared opposite him at the mouth of the clearing.

It was the man he had come to meet. He had come noiseless, with no sound of hoofs. Then—too late—Pierre recalled that the bandit's horse had made no noise at their first meeting. He waved an arm; the stranger made to ride toward him. In that moment—without warning, since there had

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been no sound of hoofs—a horse nickered behind the trees. Another, and another. One horse began to stamp.

The bandit reined in, suspicious. Then as certainty and rage dawned upon him an overzealous archer thrust out his steel headpiece from the foliage and raised his bow. The bandit wheeled with a cry of fury, dashed out of sight in the undergrowth and raised a wild shout:

"Flee! Flee! We are betrayed!"

Other shouts echoed his own. Pierre's trumpet rang out. His troopers, mounting in haste, galloped after him down the little path to the road. As they pursued they heard a fierce tumult, the yells of fighting men, the clash of steel. They then burst out into the road to find a heap of writhing men at the edge of the farther woods, and their own comrades cursing and pointing through the forest beyond. Six men were down—two bandits and four soldiers. The bandits were dead, as was one man-at-arms; all had been badly trampled by the hoofs of many horses.

"They rode us down!" cried a trooper, pointing back of him through the wood. "Twoscore of them! We waited for your horn. Even as it sounded and we came forth, a torrent of horsemen swept through us. We did what we could, but there was no time! No time, and they were many!"

"After them!" shrieked another. "Their blood for ours!"

But Pierre shook his head. His one promising chance had failed. He had not foreseen that the outlaws would be cunning enough to send a large force to meet him. There was no possibility the bandits did not foresee. Now, though his force outnumbered theirs three to two, they were safe in the forest, darkness coming on; and their horses were fleeter than his.

"There is but one hope," he said. "If they nest in a town they may swing back to the road after they think us thrown off the scent, and strike back for Maison Morte or Queraille. Look for tracks that will show which way they came hither."

The tracks were soon found, though they were none too clear in the deep dust. They came up the road from Maison Morte, and down the road from Queraille! They had come from both directions!

"They will not divide now," Pierre decided. "It is well enough to come in two details; but to divide under pursuit would be to court destruction. With us after them they will be likely to seek their holes. Pray God they ride back to the road, instead of keeping to the forest!"

For a few moments he pondered the situation, not knowing which town to strike for. His men waited in the saddle, hot with impatience and rage. It would go hard with the bandits if they were caught.

"Cercamon, take twelve men and ride toward Queraille!" he ordered. "I will take twelve and spur for Maison Morte. The rest will bide here, where we may fall back on them in case of need. The first to sight traces of them will blow his trumpet; the other will return here, and join him with the host."

"What if neither of us finds a trace?"

"Then they keep to the forest, and we fail," Pierre replied. "It grows dark—be off with you!"

Pierre and his twelve rode north toward Maison Morte, watching the road for signs. But there were no dust-clouds down the road, so far as they could judge in the failing light; no hoof-prints that could be positively identified, in the thick dust of the road, as leading north. And well this might be, seeing that the outlaws might have ridden through the wood past this point before taking to the road.

For two miles Pierre's men cantered on; then, when they had given up hope, Cercamon's trumpet pealed thin in the distance. With a joyous cry the troopers wheeled and galloped back.

Picking up the main company, they spurred fast to the south, till they came up with Cercamon's detachment. The troubadour proudly held up something in one hand. It was getting dark, but Pierre, coming close and taking the object from him, saw that it was an iron horseshoe.

"A cast shoe!" Cercamon cried. "Pointing south!"

"Fires of purgatory!" swore Pierre. "We have lost time! Back, for Maison Morte!"

"But the shoe! They have made for Queraille!"

"A blind!" Pierre cut him off. "Forty riders came up on our ambush unheard. Could they do that, think you, if their horses had been iron-shod? The track I saw in the damp mold of the wood-path was blurred. They wear leather shoes to muffle their approach. This is a trick. They have turned in the forest, sent a man

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this way to drop the shoe and mislead us and dashed for Maison Morte or some village on the north road."

He set spurs to his horse and galloped furiously northward. Unbelieving, half-hearted, the troopers followed. Looking back, Pierre saw how they lagged and sent out a brazen-lunged shout——

"Forward, ye fools, or feel the duke's wrath!"

Their spurs tore into their horses' flanks, and they pelted down the road into the darkening night. Meeting nothing, slacking rein for nothing, they rode into Maison Morte by the feel of the road under their feet and the black loom of the trees on either side.

"Patrol the street!" Pierre ordered. "Search every house!"

Most of the houses still showed rushlight through the holes in the walls that served for windows. The baffled troopers stopped not to knock, but burst in with oaths and threats, demanding to see every inmate.

Men and women were roused from early bed or late supper; children were frightened into wails of terror. Mad with the sight of their own dead, thirsty for blood, the soldiers would scarce listen to protests of innocence. Shrieks rending the darkness sent Pierre to teach his men gentleness; but nowhere did they find sight or trace of the enemy. At last, in sheer despair, Pierre called his men off and withdrew to the wood.

"We bide here till dawn," he said. "Mayhap they will think us gone, if indeed they are here at all. We shall search again in the morning, then ride to the next town."

They camped well within the wood, far enough so that the stamping and nickering of their horses could not be heard in the village. After a cold, dry meal the men lay down to sleep under the stars, grumbling. They would be very dry by daybreak, and they knew, from the grim tone of their leader's commands, that the search would go on.

BUT Pierre did not sleep. When the snores of the troopers rumbled in even chorus he rose and crawled stealthily to the edge of the wood. He pinned his faith to the testimony of that iron horseshoe. Country horses were unshod; the bandits used leather. Therefore the iron must be a blind. In the probable chance that the outlaws had ridden into or through Maison Morte—instead of scattering in the forest—lay his sole hope. If he failed now he would never get another chance; the bandits knew him now for an enemy, and the duke's man.

Hidden behind a giant beech, the last outpost of the wood, he watched the lights flicker out in the hamlet. He was weary, but he kept his vigil, his eyes roving through the darkness that hid the one street from him. For an hour, two hours, he lay motionless. Then as he gave up hope he heard a sound that set his pulse tingling.

A faint, a very faint metallic *chink-chink* tinkled in his ears, far down the forest-road that met the village street at right angles. No, it was not far! A silent-footed horse loomed out of the dark almost before his face. He looked for the gleam of starlight on steel, but saw none. Yet here was a ridden horse, passing at a walk that barely set the rider's armor tinkling. It turned at the village street, passed down, then turned again almost at once. Then came the rasp of mailed feet as the rider dismounted on stone.

On stone! Pierre ran forward, making for the nearest house. Suddenly he fell flat in the darkness, his eyes fixed on the door of that house which two nights before he had observed from almost this same spot. He was within a few yards of it, concealed in the angle it formed with the sheer cliff. He recalled the woman who swept its wide stone base. The door creaked open. A faint light, half-shaded by a hand, fell on the threshold and flashed on a steel helmet; then the door closed.

Pierre gasped. Not only had the rider entered the house; he had led his horse in after him! Pierre sprang forward, cautiously removed his helmet, and peered in at the one window. Three people sat round the dying supper-fire: an old, bent man, an aged woman and a girl. Of horse and rider, who had entered but a moment before, there was no trace! Pierre's eyes searched the one-roomed interior in vain.

The strange rider had vanished.

The flesh crawled on Pierre's back. No freer than other men from the superstition of his day, he felt certain that the powers of evil were in this mystery. His hair rose with the half-formed fear that the bent old man might suddenly grow hoofs, horns and tail, and come straight for his hiding-place. The old woman was surely a witch.

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His lips moved in silent prayer. He had a duty, from which neither men nor devils should turn him. The two old folk were talking in low, excited tones while the girl threw in an occasional word in a scornful voice. Yet he could not understand them, for they were at the other end of the house from him, and spoke in the broadest Norman dialect.

For an hour more Pierre lurked at the window, till he was satisfied that the powers of evil had indeed spirited the unknown rider away. He crawled back to the edge of the wood.

He had scarcely reached the trees when the door of the house flew quietly open. The light gleamed once more on the helm of the rider, who mounted on the wide stone threshold, flung a subdued but excited word over his shoulder and spurred his horse. Down the few yards of street he galloped, turned the corner at full speed, coming nearer and nearer Pierre's hiding-place.

Pierre had made his decision as the rider mounted. Crouching on one knee, he leaped out and grabbed the man as the horse swung past him, dragged him from the saddle and flung him violently on the ground. Bearing him, unconscious from his fall, into the forest, Pierre tied his feet and hands with strips of his cloak, and roused his men. When all were gathered about him, Pierre struck flint and steel, and lighted a pine torch, trusting to the trees to hide its glow from the village.

The stranger's fall, and the human solidity of his flesh, sent a thrill of relief to Pierre's heart, which had pounded with panic when he seized the man. As the light of his torch fell on the prisoner's face he uttered a cry of astonishment.

THE prisoner soon returned to consciousness. Whipping out a dagger, Pierre set the point at the helpless throat, saying sternly:

"I have seen you at Col Rouge. Tell me the secret of that house or you die!"

The captive groaned, but held his tongue. Pierre thrust the dagger just beneath the skin.

"I know nothing!" the man cried.

Pierre sheathed his blade.

"I can not torture you," he said, "but the duke will unless you speak!"

He felt the fellow tremble under his hands, and knew how great must be his fear of that mercilessness which the outlaws showed to such of their fellows as were so unlucky as to be captured. Fear of a horrible death and hope of life will win speech from almost any man.

"If I tell," the captive faltered, "will my life be spared?"

"I will ask the duke to show you mercy and will swear that you will not suffer torture," Pierre answered.

"Untie my feet then, and I will show you. I have followed you from Col Rouge. My master feared your expedition might be against Guillaume."

Shuddering with his own fears, the prisoner paused; then resumed:

"I was on my way back from him, with word of your attack in the forest, when you seized me. The outlaws are——"

"Are in that house, or have passed through it!" Pierre broke in.

He understood now; his prisoner's confession, and disappearance in the house, made the situation clear. The man had seen Guillaume the Faceless *after* entering the mysterious house, and went from it with a message from the bandit leader—and the house was empty, save for a handful of villagers!

"The rear wall is false!" Pierre guessed with assurance.

"Aye, my lord," the captive confirmed, "and your way lies through it."

Slashing the bonds from the man's ankles, Pierre whistled to his men. Leaving their horses tethered, the troopers followed him toward the door of that strange house. Their feet rang on the stone platform. A cry from within gave the alarm. Pierre seized the latch, but the door held. He heard the *chock* of bars flung hastily home.

Thrice he hurled himself at the heavy oak in vain. Then at his order a burly trooper ranged alongside him. Eight others, four behind each of them, formed in a tail of men, each clasping the shoulders of the man in front.

Pierre raised his voice in an old sea-chantey of his boyhood. To the measured cadence the ten flung all their weight forward, even as he thrust his own great shoulders against the wood. It withstood three concerted heaves; at the fourth it gave. A fifth, and a bar crashed; three more, and other bars burst with the rending noise of dry timber. At the tenth onfall the door flew open, precipitating the whole line within.

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The old couple crouched in a corner; the girl backed against the rear wall in apparent terror. Her arms were spread, her face white in the light of a single torch. This torch Pierre snatched from its socket. His captive caught his arm.

"The midmost eight planks!" he cried.

"You, and you!" Pierre shouted to two troopers. "Bide with this man, hide him and see that no harm comes to him!"

He advanced to the rear wall and counted off the planks. This wall of the house was against the side of the cliff, apparently in contact with the solid rock. The planks were vertical, foot-wide and very thick. Pounding on them, Pierre heard them ring hollow. They must be hinged on the other side.

"Tear those planks down, or burst them open!" he ordered.

Half a dozen troopers advanced; one laid a hand on the girl's shoulder, to pull her out of the way. As he touched her, she sprang at him, a knife gleaming in her hand. The soldier met her attack swiftly, wrenching the knife from her at the cost of three slashed fingers. He flung her in a corner, where she crouched, sobbing. His fellows were already at work on the stout planks; but these held. The shouts of startled men behind the wall impelled them to greater efforts.

"Axes!" shouted Pierre.

Men ran up with battle-axes, crying for room to swing. Their broad blades bit deep into the wood, sending splinters flying. Plank after plank crashed down. Then came a humming whistle, and two men dropped with arrows in their breasts. At a word from Pierre his own archers lined the gaps, pouring in a steel hail till the volleys beyond the wall ceased.

Seizing an ax from a fallen soldier, Pierre threw all his huge strength into his blows. Others joined his assault. The wall was down at last. With a roar of triumph the troopers dashed into the opening.

There was no need of their torch; the space that opened before them was ablaze with many glowing cressets. It was a great cavern in the rocky hill—not a natural cave, but a straight tunnel, faced with cut, squared stones.

Half-way down it gathered the outlaws—fifty or more, sturdy ruffians armed to the eyes. At their head towered a burly giant whose mail was topped with a masked helmet hiding all but his glowing eyes—Giullaume the Faceless.

PIERRE had planned his assault while his ax yet thundered on the wall. The arrows of his archers had forced the bandits far back from the barricade; now at his shouted order renewed volleys held them at bay while his troopers formed. Thus the enemy lost the advantage of position; the gap was forced, and the soldiers arrayed for the bitter last fight.

Nor, though the bandits strove to return arrow for arrow, could they gain the mastery. Pierre's attack had been so swift that it caught them with half their bows unstrung. As fast as an outlaw wasted a precious moment to string his bowstaff—thus necessarily casting aside his shield and leaving his side exposed—Pierre's marksmen dropped him. The ruffians had but one recourse—to close at once, and by the pressure of counter-attack to smother the Norman arrow-flights.

Snarling with rage, Guillaume the Faceless cried his men on to the assault. They came—so thick and fast that the Norman archers had to drop their bows and draw blade. His eyes singling out Pierre, Guillaume leaped to meet him, shield up, sword flailing. Pierre met him with left foot out and point ready. With all the skill of his long service, with the genius for his weapon born in him and trained by Guilhem, the great swordsman of Toulouse, Pierre outfaced the bandit's fierce cuts and circling slashes.

His own blade was weapon and shield in one—which was well, for Guillaume was as strong as he. With terrific force the outlaw hammered Pierre's blade and struggled to break down his guard; nor could Pierre, with the shield-wall of his own men advancing behind him, give back. He thrust swiftly, with shortened blade. Three times his point slid in under Guillaume's guard till it was reddened thrice. Then the bandit, mad with his wounds, abandoned defense to lash in with a mighty back-stroke. As he raised his blade, Pierre's edge drove through the base of his neck.

Drawing clear of his dead foe, Pierre found Cercamon at his side. The troubadour's point was dripping; two dead men lay at Pierre's left. Exchanging glances, the friends laughed and threw themselves into the *mêlée*.

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The death of their leader left the bandits without command; the one authority which had been their strength was gone, and their habit of dependence on it was now their weakness. Knowing they must fight their way to freedom over the bodies of the soldiers or perish, they fought with wild courage; but they fought as individuals, without leadership. They did not wait for the battle to be brought to them.

Pierre's men, trained to formation and discipline, were in an irregular column five deep, their ranks extending across the cavern. Their orderly, inexorable advance, their impenetrable wall of shields, flung their enemies before them like spray from a crag, and threw the outlaws into confusion.

Now and again their lines rippled as they stumbled over bales, sacks and piles of plunder that lay where the bandits had flung them; but always the array closed again and came mercilessly on. Held together by Pierre's shouted orders and the cries of their sergeants, they went at the butchery with veteran precision. The outlaws hurled themselves again and again on those terrible serried points, knowing that whoso survived the sword must die by the rope, unless they could tear their way through to freedom.

But they faced the impossible. As they recoiled, two of the Norman ranks formed into the point of a wedge, led on by Pierre and Cercamon. At the word of command the wedge dashed forward, hurling the bandits back. The two matchless swordsmen in the van found a mark with almost every thrust; no stroke, however fierce, could pass their guard. The bandits gave way before them, drawing back farther and farther toward a wooden partition in the rear of the tunnel, whence came the reek of a stable.

Seven of the soldiers were down and many wounded. But the spilled blood only drove them on, inspired with the passion to avenge their dead. When one was smitten, a comrade in the rank behind would hurl him back and take his place.

The implacable solidity of those ranks, lapping from wall to wall, ever surging forward, terrified the outlaws. Bleeding and broken, they reeled back and back. Their breath came in weary, gulping sobs; yet ever they lashed out at their foes as they retreated. But they were skrinking fast.

And as their number shrank, the bandits found their enemy's flanks trickling round and enfolding their own. Then they were hewn down by ones and twos, hemmed in, with still other soldiers fighting for a chance to slip in behind them. At that they fled for the back of the tunnel, where they might get their shoulders against the partition and prolong the death-struggle. This gave Pierre the opportunity to bring his bows into play again.

As they broke he sounded his horn. Three times he blew before his blood-mad followers would heed the order; then at last they drew off, glaring at their beaten enemy. Under cover of the men-at-arms, his archers withdrew to pick up their bows, rejoined the ranks and shot swiftly into the thick of the outlaws. Pierre, watching for a sign of surrender, saw a door in the partition open behind the enemy.

"Strike them down!" he cried. "Quick, before they loose the horses!

The smell from the farther enclosure was enough to reveal what lay beyond. He knew there could be no means of escape from the stable into and through the mountain, or the bandits would have tried it long since; but it might be perilous for spirited horses to be loosed upon his ranks in that tunnel. The smell of blood would drive them mad; there would be trampling and kicking, amid which the surviving bandits might make a bold attempt at freedom.

At his command the whole troop closed on the outlaws, striking with sword and ax, snatching them back from the stable, cutting them down without mercy. Then the survivors, seized with panic, cast down their weapons and made submission.

Swiftly the soldiers bound them. Only nine were left alive to be made captive, and of these but two were unwounded. Other troopers, with rough surgery, were looking after their own wounded and gathering their dead together.

NOW the victors spread out through the tunnel, examining the place with curiosity. Pierre found it a great marvel. Though he knew it not, the workmanship of those walls was Roman—part of some ancient work which those mighty engineers of the past had builded. The walls were crudely scrawled with designs made by the smoke of torches; and here and there a mason's mark, with a rough Latin inscription, was cut into the stone.

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But it was the floor which interested him and all his company, most of all. Here were piles and bales of rich goods, silks and velvets looted from the merchants who traversed France and Italy with wares; heaps of gold and silver candlesticks, altar-cloths, jeweled reliquaries, and—in chests and bags full to bursting—coins pillaged from all the countryside. The soldiers were plunging greedy hands into the loot; but Pierre bade them leave it alone.

"This will wait!" he said. "The duke will reward you all for this night's work; but do ye not dare to rob him!"

Then, calling Cercamon, he bade his friend take half his force and stand guard over cave and village.

"Quarter the wounded in the best houses," he ordered. "I will bring back a leech to tend their hurts. Seize any man who moves from his own house, any stranger, any horseman!"

Still dripping with the sweat of the fight, he made his way back to the cave-mouth and through the house, followed by four and twenty of his men and the nine captives. The two on guard in the house, ill pleased with missing the fight, clung to the captive guide and the three peasants with grim bitterness.

"What part have these played?" Pierre asked the man he had captured in the road.

"The girl is Guillaume's sister and my master's sweetheart," the man answered. "These are her people."

"Let them go!" Pierre commanded. "It will be punishment enough to drive them from the village where they have passed their lives."

The soldiers nodded, knowing indeed that homeless peasants would be hard put to it to find bread to fill their mouths.

Leaving the horses of the conquered for Cercamon's detachment to bring on later with the wounded and the spoil, Pierre led his men back to the wood. Helping the prisoners into the saddle, the soldiers bound their feet under the horses' bellies and fettered each man by the neck to the man ahead at intervals of twenty feet. Thus roped, and guarded by the soldiers, they would make the journey back to Col Rouge with no chance for escape.

"To the castle!" Pierre cried; and conquerors and conquered rode in a long column through the dawn-gray woods.

"YOU have done a red night's work!" Duke Henry approved.

He spoke plain truth; Pierre's mailed sleeves were red to the elbows, and his over-tunic spattered with blood. His dinted helmet had been knocked half-over one eye.

Pierre gave his report fully and simply, praising his soldiers for their valor and Cercamon for his leadership.

"What of yourself?" Henry asked. "Your wit and your sword have rid my realm of a pest that long preyed upon it; yet you say little of your own work."

"I have done that which you bade me," Pierre replied.

"There is more yet."

The duke's tone was grim.

"I will do the rest. This fellow you have brought"—he jerked a blunt thumb at the cowering captive who had guided Pierre to the cavern—"is one I know—Ho, there!"

A servant came running to his call.

"Fetch me the seneschal!" Henry ordered.

In a little while the fellow returned, bowing in Odo de Montvoisin. A gesture from Henry dismissed the servant, while his eyes never left Odo.

The triumphal procession had brought its captives to the postern, where Pierre had ordered the guard to lead them straight to the duke. They had passed up the stair of the after-court, to the vast astonishment of the half-dozen men-at-arms on duty there. The duke had come so swiftly that few in the castle guessed what had really happened.

Odo de Montvoisin, as he entered the room, took in the scene with a sweeping glance—the blood-stained soldiers, the bloodier captives, and the bound, shame-faced guide whose eyes would not meet his own. Odo blenched, but recovered his poise swiftly.

"You know this dog?" Henry pointed to the frightened guide.

"He—he is my man, your Grace."

Licking his dry lips, Odo told the truth, knowing that Henry knew it already.

"What is—who are all these?"

"Stand at the door, Pierre."

Henry's eyes had already flashed a quick warning. Pierre reached the door just in time to seize Odo as the seneschal turned to run, and dragged him back by the velvet collar of his splendid surcoat.

"Speak, you!"

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The duke's angry command set the prisoner to babbling a terrified confession.

"My lord—mercy! Sir Odo—"

Odo, wrenching himself free by a sudden twist, sprang for the prisoner with unsheathed dagger. But Pierre caught his elbow, and the duke struck the weapon from his hand. The prisoner finished his confession in peace; and before he had done, Odo's face was as white as new parchment.

The man's confession made it convincingly clear why the duke's movements were always known to the bandits in time for escape or counter-stroke; why Odo himself had never taken prisoners or kept them alive to be questioned. Nay, more; Odo, knowing when the duke would hunt in the forest and that he had given orders to be left alone in the glade to confer with Thomas and the troubadour, himself sent information to the outlaws.

Guillaume the Faceless, the dreaded, unknown bandit chief, was but a tool of Odo's. Odo's had been the imagination for Guillaume's bold raids; to Odo Guillaume had sent, by night convoy, the half of all his plunder; Odo was to reap half the ransom which Guillaume was to collect from the daring attempt to carry off the duke's two most trusted counselors. And Pierre's captive, who stammered out the startling confession, was Odo's own squire! It was he who had served as messenger and go-between from the false seneschal to the outlaws.

"Did you guess any of this?" the duke asked Pierre.

"I suspected much," Pierre answered. "In the week that I tarried in the castle I learned that Sir Odo came of an impoverished house, yet had always money to play for high stakes, to dress richly, to buy that which he desired. That, and his failure to hunt down the bandits, made me guess that he might be the hidden traitor. But no accusation could be brought against a knight without proof."

"There is proof enough now!" Henry growled. "Ho, one of you! Fetch *Tranche-tête!* Bid him come for duty!"

Odo shivered like a poplar-leaf in Pierre's hands.

"Not that, my lord!" he pleaded. "Not for me! I am a noble!"

And Pierre seconded his appeal, crying earnestly:

"Not the executioner, my lord! This is a knight, entitled to put his guilt or innocence to trial by combat. I will myself take the burden of proving his treachery."

Henry laughed unpleasantly.

"Look you, Pierre. If this is a knight, then you, a mere captain, can not meet him in trial by combat save by my sanction—and I will not give that sanction. If he is a traitor—and we know he is—then to cross swords with him would put a stain on your honor.

"Trial by combat is foolery. I have known an honest man's sword to play him false or his armor to give way at an unknown defect, and a foul rascal to save his own life by that means. Do you think God always gives triumph to the right? I know better than that—and Thomas says I am stupid!"

Pierre's piety was shocked, but he could say no more. A squat, heavy-featured man, clad in closefitting red, came in at the door.

"*Tranche-tête!*" cried Henry.

"Aye, lord!" the red one answered.

A huge ax, which he had held behind his back, swung up in ponderous salute.

"Take this whipped hound"—the duke pointed to Odo—"to the battlements. Strike off his golden spurs. Then— Nay, not the ax. The rope!"

Odo fell at his lord's knees, clutching miserably at Henry's robe. But the duke kicked him away, and he was borne to death between a soldier and the red executioner.

"*Tranche-tête!*" Henry bellowed.

"Aye, lord?" shouted the headsman over his shoulder.

"When you have done with him come back for these."

He who had confessed wailed for mercy; and Pierre spoke up in quick concern:

"My lord, I promised to plead for him. He guided us—"

"Enough! He shall be whipped from my gates, and turned loose to shift for himself. I have shown mercy enough—ask me no more!"

Pierre turned to go; but Henry called him back.

"You have done well, Pierre," he said more gently now. "You are fitter to be a knight than many who wear gold spurs. From now on you shall be my own squire. God send the day when your further deeds win you the touch of my sword on your shoulder, the spurs and the golden belt of knighthood!"

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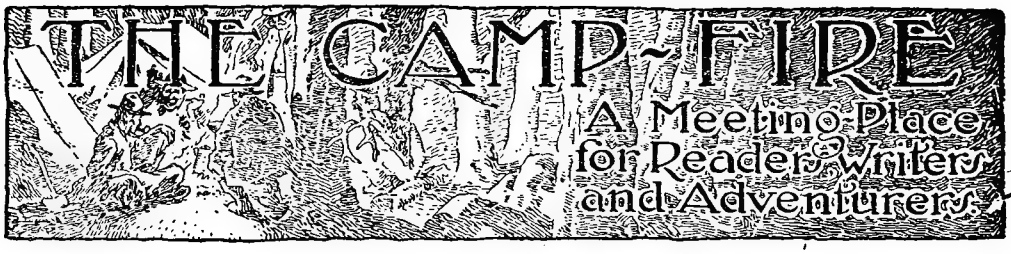

Our Camp-Fire came into being May 5, 1912, with our June issue, and since then its fire has never died down. Many have gathered about it and they are of all classes and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, adventurers and stay-at-homes, and from all parts of the earth. Some whose voices we used to know have taken the Long Trail and are heard no more, but they are still memories among us, and new voices are heard, and welcomed.

We are drawn together by a common liking for the strong, clean things of out-of-doors, for word from the earth's far places, for man in action instead of caged by circumstance. The *spirit* of adventure lives in all men; the rest is chance.

But something besides a common interest holds us together. Somehow a real comradeship has grown up among us. Men can not thus meet and talk together without growing into friendlier relations; many a time does one of us come to the rest for facts and guidance; many a close personal friendship has our Camp-Fire built up between two men who had never met; often has it proved an open sesame between strangers in a far land.

Perhaps our Camp-Fire is even a little more. Perhaps it is a bit of leaven working gently among those of different station toward the fuller and more human understanding and sympathy that will some day bring to man the real democracy and brotherhood he seeks. Few indeed are the agencies that bring together on a friendly footing so many and such great extremes as here. And we are numbered by the hundred thousand now.

If you are come to our Camp-Fire for the first time and find you like the things we like, join us and find yourself very welcome. There is no obligation except ordinary manliness, no forms or ceremonies, no dues, no officers, no anything except men and women gathered for interest and friendliness. Your desire to join makes you a member.

FOLLOWING custom, H. H. Birney, Jr., rises and introduces himself on the occasion of his first story in our magazine. I suppose I've no real excuse for leaving in a letter to Camp-Fire one writer's praise of another, but I'm working after hours, am tired and I guess my conscience is worn out too.

Philadelphia.

Will attempt, in my compliance with time-honored custom, to make my bow and speak my piece to that goodly company that clusters round the Camp-Fire.

HALLOWED indeed is ancient tradition, but there are times when the breaking of time honored custom is easier than compliance therewith. So many men who have really made their mark in both individual achievment and letters are sitting around the flames of "Camp-Fire" that it is little-less than presumptuous for a raw recruit to bulge forward to the most comfortable place and make himself heard.

However, my birthday is April first and you all know what kind of people rush in where angels fear to tread. Born, bred, and educated in the City of Brotherly Love, which isn't half as slow a town as some of her traducers would have you imagine. Received a Latin-Scientific education, but almost ever since I left college have followed technical lines, chiefly in connection with the automobile industry.

Was West in 1905-1906, through southern Colorado, Arizona, Utah and New Mexico, poking around cliff dwellings, hobnobbing with Navajos to learn their language, and other innocuous but interesting pastimes.

ADVENTURES, well, maybe I've had 'em and maybe they're only interesting and rather vivid experiences. Had a fellow run a gun in my face one night on a dark road. After sundry interrogations he informed me I wasn't the man he was looking for, which I accepted as a passport to move on. Was on the other end of the gun on another occasion when a smoke ran amuck in a munitions factory where I happened to be employed. He got well. Enlisted ten days before war was declared as a private of infantry. Came out a shavetail in the Air Service, the proud (?) possessor of five silver chevrons. Think I ought to have one on the other arm for wounded feelings. And right here I want to stand up and say a few words on Thomson Burtis's tales of the Border Patrol. They are sure the real thing. I've heard several ex-flyers comment on them and express the wish that some of the other people who are trying to introduce airplanes into

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fiction knew about one-tenth as much of the practical end of it—what an airplane can do and what it can't.

Like to ride, shoot and swim. Have never been guilty of golf, except the African variety. Poker is the king of indoor sports.

Salute to adventurers, active and passive! Here's how, or, as the Air Service says, "Happy Landing!" —H. H. BIRNEY, JR.

More about Camp-Fire's Expedition

HERE follow the condensed statements made from some more letters concerning the Camp-Fire or *Adventure* expedition suggestion by Comrade McDonald. There are still more of them for the next issue including many of those first received. After next issue you ought to have a pretty fair idea of how Camp-Fire in general feel and think about the plan. Then for a vote.

I've an idea that one question, that of where to send our expedition, should not be considered finally settled by this vote. The vote, however, should determine who is to serve on the executive committee that is to put into operation the plan decided on. Why not have the committee take up the half-dozen or dozen places receiving the highest vote, get information as to the advantages and disadvantages of each, and then present this information to you for final decision? Or even, to save time, empower them to select any one of the number that proves in their judgment best and most practical?

ANOTHER complication. How is the committee to make choice of place until they know how much we are going to have in the way of funds? The expense might automatically bar some places. How about having each vote indicate how much the voter is willing to contribute?

Just to keep registering the point, I've said I was not going to be one of the committee and I'm not. Thanks just the same to those of you kind enough to suggest it. That suggestion is the only one that I systematically cut out of the letters when I condensed them for passing on to you.

No question of the keen and solid interest shown, is there? And remember that I'm not passing on to you the many letters that were merely endorsements of the plan and offered no specific suggestions or data. The idea was first suggested by a Camp-Fire comrade, the members are shaping it according to their various suggestions, the executive committee will be Camp-Fire comrades, Camp-Fire will furnish the money as well as the impetus and there will undoubtedly be Camp-Fire members in the personnel. It's a Camp-Fire stunt all right and it looks to me as if Camp-Fire were going to get away with it in great shape.

Philadelphia, Pa.

One dollar; more for those who can pay more. No contributors' names printed; after expedition, a book telling its story, with names of all contributors. The collection brought back by the expedition to be placed in building of our own. Plenty of places in South America that no white man has ever seen.—HYMAN HARRY GOLDBERG.

Newark, N. J.

Put it on paying basis. Take motion and still pictures of African natives, animals and plant life. Take along several lecturers who would see the pictures taken and sometimes be included in them. Use stereopticon as well as projector. Put into pictures and preserve all such things as Santie Sabalala tells about; extremely valuable as well as interesting. Africa looks best. Mongolian and Siberian steppes and deserts, Iceland and Greenland, Labrador, Borneo and others are good.—FRED L. BOWDEN.

Skelmorlie, Australia.

Certainly a museum should run it. New Guinea, the Chaco of South America, or the Never-Never of Australia.—LUCIA S. BROWN.

Bernardston, Mass.

You can not kick up a crowd of men and have them obey the leader, and if you are going on anything you have to have one leader, and what he says goes. I vote for some institution to handle it.—A. K. BROWN.

New York City.

Auto race around world. Get backing of best auto concern in America. Special model for five passengers. Get best two pilot drivers in America; a writer like Mundy; a photographer; an all-around interpreter. Routes and information from auto-associations of world. Challenge some other magazine. Stakes; banquet, and $5,000 to each of crew. Our car to start west, other east, both to check in at certain newspaper offices en route.—E. J. VIGNERON.

DeLand, Fla.

Strong for Marshall R. Hall's letter in Oct. 10, 1921. Put me down for $10, and more if there is no limit.—C. F. MCCARTY.

Allendale, S. C.

O. K. if it's not just outfitting a bunch of geological old fogies to a nice little picnic at our expense. Most of us want some action other than with a square and foot-rule.—ED. N. CLARK.

Big Heart, Okla.

No limit on size of shares. Try something with fair chance of gain instead of an almost sure loser. Why not buy a ship? Could have almost complete crew of Adventurers, any length trip, leave any time. Could take a year and cover more than one place. Could carry our own boats and pack-mules. Easter Island I think is one place where you'd have to pack

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your own. Moving-picture outfit. Retain motion-picture and story rights; will mean a balance on right side of ledger. If to Central America, Edgar Young leader; if elsewhere, one of our other leaders. How about that garnet mine out West? Might stake us for a second venture. My $10 ready.—ELMER GILMIR.

Chicago Heights, Ill.

If money will help, count me in for as much as I can. If it goes to the Pacific or the northern coast of Canada and an extra man with knowledge of both is needed, free of charge and expenses, count me in. Strongly approve Mr. Hall's plan.—ARMOND DE LUSSIER-PIGEON.

Pierre, S. D.

Dig out the temple of Ptah in Egypt. Search for lost books mentioned in Bible, and manuscript tradition says were saved from burning of Alexandrian Library.—WILBUR MUNDT.

Philadelphia, Pa.

Buried treasure, etc., don't work out very often in real life. Right in this country are remains of a civilization as little known as any aboriginal race on face of earth, the cliff and cave-dwellers of our own Southwest. Also the pit-house culture that preceded them. Inexpensive and easy. An American expedition, financed by North Americans, started by an American magazine, making a sincere effort to add to the present knowledge of a distinctly American race.—H. H. BIRNEY, JR.

New York City.

Have been a motion-camera man several years on travel work all over the world and have been a still photographer. Would give my services for expenses and be willing to chip in my little bit as well ——.

Omaha, Neb.

We offer our services and cameras, both motion and still. Were official camera-men for army in France, Belgium and Germany. Been in the game twenty-two years; pictures in all parts of U. S. Both Americans. Both rated army sharpshooters, rifle and pistol. All we ask for our services on this trip is adventure and lots of it.—E. R. TRABOLD and L. P. GOLIGHTLY.

Lakewood, N. Y.

Let's have it. Life is too short to miss a good thing like that.

Have it underwritten. Suppose $40,000 cost for first year. Get forty individuals, corporations or institutions to guarantee it and post an ante of $10,000 cash. With this guarantee need not worry at every turn to make both ends meet. Also the trust company handling funds will see its way clearer. Let the readers find the underwriters; of course the Ridgway Co. can sign in. Underwriters will have due acknowledgment of their efforts made in print and their names in the book that will probably be written. Otherwise all plans would be held up till the last shares came in. Suppose shares came to $30,000, the underwriters would get off with a net cost of their initial ante, some $250 each. Which is fair enough. In case results of exploring party prove unusually valuable (or costly), the magazine would need time to point this out to readers who would then send in additional funds; but, pending this, the underwriters would keep up the balance with the trust company.—HAROLD LAMB.

Braddock, Pa.

Grand idea. My $10 ready. Will go as laborer, cook, clerical work, any way I may be useful; all I ask is board and bunk. Approve Mr. Hall's financial plan and Mr. Strickland's plan for voting for destination. Whatever you do, let A. O. Friel go along if it is in the Javary region.—CLARENCE JENKINS.

New York City.

Am behind it from $1 up, even if it hurts. Splendid idea.—JOHN MADDEN.

Niagara Falls, N. Y.

We should not allow this capital idea to be lost. There is little enough of such in these days of so-called civilization and we, as one big Camp-Fire family, should get behind it. $10 shares, one to each. No one should have more voice because of larger contribution. Or make it $12 or $15. A button or certificate for members of the company.—CLARENCE M. JOHNSON.

Mansfield, O.

Why not go into the motion-picture field? This would furnish opportunities for expeditions into out-of-the-way places and should be very profitable. Real, clean, adventurous photoplays as a relief from the present love, sex and problem plays.—DICK HAUTZENROEDER.

East Canaan, Conn.

Don't like honor-roll for big subscribers; undemocractic. All the rest O. K.—PAUL L. ANDERSON.

Denver, Colo.

Following may please more of our "pardners" than would an expedition:

Up in middle of Rockies, headwaters of the Box Elder, are eight hundred acres finest timber I've ever seen up and down the Continental Divide. A mill, ready to run; lot of cabins; passable roads; far enough from Yellowstone Highway to keep out tourists. Trout; heart of hunting country. Get right men on job and we'd not shoot our $10 without something to show for it; right men on job would bring more than $10 back, besides having a Summer camp with hunting and fishing, and jobs for those needing them. A club-proposition. Cost of timber, cabins, mill and engines, clear title, $20,000; couple thousand more to run it. This isn't my timber.—BOB DAVID.

A desire for something *permanent* appears in a good many letters—a permanent organization, a permanent general clubhouse, a game preserve, etc. Personally, I'm strong for something permanent, if we can get the right thing. But *where?* No one place is easily accessible to all our scattered comrades. How many of us in the East or Canada or foreign countries could afford the time or money to go to that 800 acres? Even if we chose a place nearer the center of population, only a minority could reach it easily. And would we rather have a business on 800 acres, or merely a Camp-Fire preserve of 8,000 acres for about the same money?

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I've an idea our Camp-Fire Stations may turn out to offer the best solution of the permanent club and headquarters problem—hundreds of meeting-places scattered all over the world, each capable of any amount of development according to the wishes, ability and energy of the local members, with a general organization to bind them together and give support.

Farmington, N. M.

We're all adventurers under the skin; whether we acknowledge it or not, not one of us that wouldn't like to be in that expedition—next best, have detailed account as often as possible.

Success or failure rests with men selected—who will make it a real Adventure or a flash in the pan. Calls for real men, stayers. One quitter can "jim the whole mill"—a quitter always quits at the critical time.

Don't believe the kind we want will go without pay; so few qualified and have the money. Pay salaries to right men. Will be times when it won't be a party, organization or expedition, but simply 10, 15 or 20 individuals and possibly each up against a different proposition.

New York City

I have a $10 bill ready when you gather your fund.—HULDA B. HALOW.

Burlingame, Calif.

$1 shares. Many who would like to feel an active interest in the enterprise can not afford to devote even as much as $10 of their earnings at one time.—FRANK A. BOOM.

New York City

The critical point seems "Who gets to go? Who decides? Favor outside institution like museum to do selecting but compelled to take certain proportion from our number; institution to have *full* command and authority in field, with one man as chief. Members of ordinary expeditions are selected with utmost care for individual qualities and ability to *pull together*, on ours no opportunity even to meet till after selected; almost sure result—a riot in the field. Need a solid, congenial nucleus and one man in unquestioned control.

Favor a $1 share per man with chance for larger contributions; amounts not printed with names but books open to inspection; totals published.

Central America, particularly Yucatan, S. A., New Guinea or other Pacific islands all look good, but am open to any likely place.

Executive committee with me not on it.—A. S. H.

FOLLOWING our old custom, Violet M. Methley rises and introduces herself to Camp-Fire on the occasion of her first story in our magazine. Seldom indeed is a woman admitted to our writers' brigade and our greeting is all the more cordial on that account.

London.

Regarding my life-history, there does not seem anything much to say. I have traveled much, to Ceylon, Egypt, Australia, as well as fairly widely in Europe. Most of my "foreign" stories are based on bits of real experience, either my own, or, more usually, those of other people known to me.

IT IS India and Ceylon which appeal to me more than any other parts of the world, mainly, perhaps because all my people more or less have been connected with the British rule in India, from the days of "John Company" onward.

And so far as my writing is concerned, the only incident at all peculiar—and that only in a *certain* sense—occurred in connection which Ceylon.

Many years ago—in 1803 to be exact—an ancestor of mine, Major Adam Davie of the, then, Malay Regiment, was in command of the garrison of Kandy. They were surrounded by the native troops in overwhelming numbers, and forced to surrender; whereupon all were massacred, with the exception of Davie, who was kept a prisoner in Kandy until his death, nine years later.

Only a few fragmentary messages came from him, and it served the purpose of the British Government to make of this soldier a scapegoat, to imply even that he was guilty of treachery.

THIS was never believed by *soldiers*, but in Ceylon it became more or less of an accepted thing, and it was always my wish to vindicate this unfortunate ancestor of mine. Documents were hard to come by, and months of search amongst the Colonial Office papers failed to bring forward anything conclusive.

I had almost given up in despair, when, one day I went to the Record Office, and, looking at the list, asked for a volume, almost at random—just because I felt I *must*. It was for records years after the death of Davie in captivity, yet in it I found the MS. and unpublished diary of an Army surgeon, which entirely exculpated the unfortunate Major.

I used this for the substance of a paper which I read as a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and I have also incorporated the material in a novel entitled "Man's Honor" recently published by Hurst and Blackett of London.

WHAT is perhaps even more curious, in this book I gave precise descriptions of various buildings in Kandy and the neighborhood, which I had not been able to visit. There seemed no effort to me in giving the details—I saw it all before me. When a great authority on the antiquities of Ceylon read the book, his comment was that I must have studied these various buildings very closely. He would not believe that I had never seen them with my own eyes.

I am not particularly inclined toward psychic matters, yet I can not help feeling that the spirit of my unfortunate ancestor may have somehow intervened, to help forward his own vindication.

Possibly some of your readers—travelers or residents in Ceylon—may have come across further traces of "Davie." I have once or twice received information from strange sources.—VIOLET M. METHLEY.

SEVERAL years ago our magazine announced a department covering sea ballads and chanteys, which was later to cover cowboy and lumberjack songs, songs of the Old West and so on. The purpose

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was twofold; first to collect as many as possible of these songs that had not yet been put into print, so that they might not be lost entirely; second, to provide an expert who could answer the questions that are always coming in from you—"Who can supply the remainder of this poem?" "What is the title of the song from which the following is taken?" "Who wrote such-and-such a song?" Quite a number of you responded to appeals made for hitherto unpublished chanteys and sea ballads, but the department fizzled out because the expert in charge failed to carry out the work he had undertaken.

Since then questions have continued to come in and we've had to refer some of them to Camp-Fire in general. Camp-Fire has, I think, always been able to come across with the answer. But the interest shown along these lines deserves special provision and quicker response than is now possible. So we have started a new department, one that will *not* fizzle—"Songs That Men Have Sung," in "Ask Adventure."

I KNOW it will not fizzle for two reasons: First, the interest among you in real man's poetry is strong enough to support any department that is kept even half alive. Second, we've secured the best man I know to handle that department. Instead of being only half alive, it will, under him, be once and a half alive. He's a man's man, hale and husky in mind and body. Most of the spare time left him from active business life is spent in the open with a rifle in his hands. He's been around the world. Member of the Adventurers' Club of New York. But—put into his hands a bit of poetry with real backbone and red blood in it and for the time being he forgets everything else. It's been almost a life-long hobby and his collection of man-poetry is probably equaled by no other individual collection. His is not merely the academic interest, though he is amply supplied with the education and culture necessary to such; he's interested simply because he likes it, because, while the usual anemic poetry runs off him like water off a duck, poetry with real strength and fiber gets him where he lives.

Not long ago we had at Camp-Fire "The Little Red God," an unsigned poem from the book "Songs of Men." The man I'm talking about is the man who collected those poems into book form. Also two other collections in book form "Songs of Horses" and "Songs of Dogs," all three volumes published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston. Robert Frothingham, already known to many of you through the pages of magazines devoted to outdoor sports, is just the expert we need to have in charge of the new department. Also, you'll find him a good comrade.

WE'RE just going to let the new department grow up naturally, as it is bound to do. When it gets well set in its ways, we'll give it regular place and space. Haven't yet even given it its name and will welcome suggestions. Something like "Man's Poetry" or "Men's Songs" is the general idea. For the present we are listing it under "Old Songs that Men Have Sung" and put a notice of it in "Ask Adventure." Nothing doing in the way of ordinary poetry. What the department deals in is the kind of poetry that has punch enough to stick in the mind of a real he man, old songs, ballads or chanteys that men sang in the old days of our country and Canada—the folk-songs of the generations just back of us; the songs that throb to the spirit of pioneer days, of rough-and-ready days, when this land was in the making. (Needless to say, any fool who comes maundering around with verse not remarkable for anything except its smut will promptly be hit over the head with an ax.) The new department is not only going to answer your specific questions but is pretty sure to collect much very valuable material that would otherwise soon be lost. I'll venture there is no other group of people in the world who can do more to dig up and save these old songs than can our Camp-Fire.

IT GOES without saying that all of you are going to sit in with Mr. Frothingham in handling this department. He and I are counting on you to help him in shaping the department until it develops into just the kind that best suits Camp-Fire's needs and wishes. And he will have no more hesitation than I have in calling out to you for assistance on any questions that stump him. There never was an expert that didn't need help sometimes; the trouble is that some of 'em don't know enough to know it—or to own up to it.

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So when you have a question along these lines, fire it in to Mr. Frothingham, in our care or at 745 Riverside Drive, New York City. Meantime, meet Robert Frothingham—he's been a Camp-Fire member for some time, though he hasn't talked any:

There's only one exception to be taken to my good friend Hoffman's introduction and that's his use of that greatly overworked term "expert." I'm no expert, never was, never expect to be. If the memory of my readers goes far enough back, they may recall the Friday afternoon sessions of their early school-days when those fellows who were no earthly good in mathematics and parsing came gallusly to the front with a "composition" and "Barbara Frietchie" or "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

INHERITED a love for robust verse and good literature from a long line of ministerial ancestors; escaped the pulpit by a narrow margin and drifted along the line of least resistance into printer's ink, telegraphy, newspaper work and the advertising business in the order given, starting at the exceedingly mature age of fourteen. It looks as if I were going to have more fun with *Adventure* than any job I have yet filled. That, however, will depend largely upon the support I get from those good scouts who sit in 'round the Camp-Fire. Know the big Outdoors fairly well, have followed the pack-horse bell over many trails throughout our own wondrous West and in the Canadian Rockies and hope to keep-a-ridin' right up to the last camp. Send in your "stuff" as Hoffman suggests and I'll do the best I can; I promise not to go to sleep on the job.

LOOKING over some recent issues of *Adventure*, I find some inquiries for those old-timers "The Cowboy's Lament," "Sam Bass" and "In the Dreary Black Hills." Letters in reply have been received from compadres Paul L. Anderson, D. Wiggins, Charles Mech, E. E. Harriman, Lee Herring, Sergeant W. C. McQueen, F. W. Conness and L. R. Gallagher. The first two of these goodly bits will be found in that excellent compilation "Songs of the Cowboys," slung together in masterly style by N. Howard (Jack) Thorp, old-time cowpuncher and cattle-man of Santa Fé, with a fine Foreword by Alice Corbin Henderson, published by Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. The latter will be found in "Cowboy Songs," a compilation by John Lomax, published by Sturgis & Walton, New York. As comrade Paul L. Anderson says in his letter: "The Cowboy's Lament" originally contained about seventy verses, the first of which could be sung in polite society, the remaining sixty-nine being whistled. It is mighty interesting to note the variety of those verses sent in by our readers, all of them apparently from memory. The last time I heard that old ditty was around a camp-fire in Wyoming, Fall of 1919, sung by a cow-puncher who had come up from Arizona to join our party on an elk hunt. He had an unusually rich and mellow barytone voice and got away with it in fine shape.

The parentage of these three poems is a bit mixed—the first being credited to Troy Hale of Battle Creek, Nebraska, the second to John Denton of Gainsville, Texas, and the third, anonymous. All made their appearance in the early eighties, and all were sired by practically every puncher in the Southwest, out of a rather promiscuous Muse—none-the-less interesting, however, on that account. "The Cowboy's Lament" follows, the other two will appear in later issues.—ROBERT FROTHINGHAM.

The Cowboy's Lament

AS I walked out in the street of Laredo,
As I walked out in Laredo one day,
I spied a poor cowboy wrapped up in white linen,
Wrapped up in white linen as cold as the clay.

"Oh, beat the drum slowly and play the fife lowly,
Play the Dead March as you carry me along;
Take me to the green valley, there lay the sod o'er me,
For I'm a young cowboy and I know I've done wrong.

"I see by your outfit that you are a cowboy,"
These words he did say as I boldly stepped by.
"Come sit down beside me and hear my sad story;
I was shot in the breast and I know I must die.

"Let sixteen gamblers come handle my coffin,
Let sixteen cowboys come sing me a song,
Take me to the graveyard and lay the sod o'er me,
For I'm a poor cowboy and I know I've done wrong.

"My friends and relations, they live in the Nation,
They know not where their boy has gone.
He first came to Texas and hired to a ranchman,
Oh, I'm a young cowboy and I know I've done wrong.

"Go write a letter to my gray-haired mother,
And carry the same to my sister so dear;
But not a word of this shall you mention
When a crowd gathers round you my story to hear.

"Then beat your drum lowly and play your fife slowly,
Beat the Dead March as you carry me along;
We all love our cowboys so young and so handsome,
We all love our cowboys although they've done wrong.

"There is another more dear than a sister,
She'll bitterly weep when she hears I am gone.
There is another who will win her affections,
For I'm a young cowboy and they say I've done wrong.

"Go gather around you a crowd of young cowboys,
And tell them the story of this my sad fate;
Tell one and the other before they go further
To stop their wild roving before 'tis too late.

"Oh, muffle your drums, then play your fifes merrily;
Play the Dead March as you go along.
And fire your guns right over my coffin;
There goes an unfortunate boy to his home.

"It was once in the saddle I used to go dashing,
It was once in the saddle I used to go gay;
First in the dram-house, then to the card-house,
Got shot in the breast, I am dying today.

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"Get six jolly cowboys to carry my coffin;
Get six pretty maidens to bear up my pall.
Put bunches of roses all over my coffin,
Put roses to deaden the clods as they fall.

"Then swing your rope slowly and rattle your spurs lowly,
And give a wild whoop as you carry me along;
And in the grave throw me and roll the sod o'er me,
For I'm a young cowboy and I know I've done wrong.

"Go bring me a cup, a cup of cold water,
To cool my parched lips," the cowboy said;
Before I turned, the spirit had left him
And gone to its Giver—the cowboy was dead.

We beat the drum slowly and played the fife lowly,
And bitterly wept as we bore him along;
For we all loved our comrade, so brave, young and handsome,
We all loved our comrade although he'd done wrong.

KIT CARSON is always an interesting figure. From our Camp-Fire cache here are some of the letters bearing on him:

Sibley, La.
February 7, 1921

In February 3rd issue there is a piece by Chas. B. McCafferty about a daughter of Kit Carson. I know not if this one was brought back to Boonville, Missouri, where she went to school and lived with a ministers family. Elzie Carson made his home with my grandfather, Wm. Rayl, and worked in his blacksmith shop at Boonville, Mo. This Elzie Carson was a younger brother of Kit. Mother told us that she never saw Kit but once. He came back to Boonville, Mo., to settle up an estate. He had a sister and this brother living there. I don't remember the sister's name. This brother went west with him. The child was sent later. I only know she was a very dark, shy little girl and my Grandmother Rayl sewed for her, made her clothes to wear to school. There may be people in Boonville, Mo., who know about her.

The minister was either a Presbyterian or Methodist. The church records may have her name.—MRS. ALLEN STORK.

Norway, Maine.
Oct. 4, 1920

Concerning Kit Carson's brother and sisters, mentioned in current issue of *Adventure*, Camp-Fire chat. While I haven't taken time to look up Carson's family history the following item obtruded itself on my notice yesterday while refreshing my recollection on an entirely different subject: (from "Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River" by H. M. Chittenden. Vol. 2, p. 279.) "On April 23, 1865, a band of Blood Indians near Fort Benton stole about forty horses belonging to a party of beaver-trappers, of whom Charley Carson, a nephew of Kit Carson, was one."—HUGH PENDEXTER.

Bon Carbo, Colo.
January 31, 1921

I was reading the Camp-Fire letters. I came on to one from Chas. B. McCafferty that speaks of Kit Carson and his Indian wife and daughter Adeline. Mr. McCafferty is right.

I THINK I can clear up the mystery of Adeline Carson. I got my information from one Wm. Drenan, who was adopted by Kit Carson in St. Louis, Mo., in 1841. Went west with Kit after Kit had sold his furs. He is the same Captain Wm. Drenan (sometimes called Branan) who wrote the book, "Thirty-one Years on the Plains and in the Mountains." He, Mr. Drenan, lived his last years and died at Mosca, Idaho, after the Indians had quieted down. 1880 he went to Seattle, Washington, ran a hotel till the fire at Seattle. He was burned out and went to Mosco, Idaho. I got acquainted with him at Mosco. I used to ride that country after cattle and was well acquainted and had many a long talk with Wm. Drenan.

This is what he told me about Adeline Carson: After her mother died Kit took her to St. Louis to a convent where she got a good education and married a doctor, Jim Calvin, at the age of twenty. Dr. Calvin took her and went west. They lived for a while at Santa Fé, New Mexico, went from there to a mining camp at Carson, Nevada, named after Kit Carson. They left Carson, Nevada, after successful mining. Went through the Beckwith Pass in California (named after Jim Beckwith) and settled on the Feather River about sixty miles from the town of Oroville, Cal., now on the Western Pacific R. R., near a little town called Springville. Adeline Carson had no children of her own. She adopted two half-breed Indians, a boy and a girl, brother and sister, whose father and mother were killed by Mexicans.

Mr. Drenan told me the girl married a rich miner and went to Sacramento, Cal. The boy married a Spanish girl and ran cattle on the Feather River. Adeline died on the ranch in the Feather River Cañon at the age 34. Dr. Calvin also died at the ranch, so I think that will clear up the mystery of Adeline Carson.—IRA EBY.

OUR Camp-Fire cache is full of discussions on various subjects as well as of letters on all kinds of things. One discussion that has had to wait for space in our pages is that on the origin of the word "gringo" and here are four letters bearing on it:

New York.
Dec. 11, 1920

In answer to Mr. T. S. Miller's request regarding the origin of the word "gringo." This word is Castilian and is in common use in Spain today. It means a foreigner of any race. In South America its use is general but not in the same sense as there it is used in speaking of some certain race as in Mexico only the Americans and English are gringos while in Argentina the Italians are called gringos.—NOEL DE JANREGINBERRY.

23 December, 1920

Believe *me*, Mr. Young's statements concerning the open-handed (and -hearted) generosity of the white men in Latin America are barely truth. I'm not an authority on all of Central America, but from Costa Rica to Guatemala I have an intimate acquaintance with most every bump in the trail, and my companion and I found the white men ("gringos" in Mexico, "Americanos," usually, in Guatemala and Salvador, "Yanques" in Nicaragua and "machos"—or he-mules—in Costa Rica) either regular guys or—

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the ——est skunks unhung. There was a middle ground, of course, but more often we found them at one extreme or the other. As it happened, we were never in need of financial assistance during our journey horseback and afoot from San José de Costa Rica to Guatemala City, but in every other way we were helped to the extent of their abilities by the fellow countrymen we encountered.

AS TO the word "gringo," I can only say that I struggled up toward man's estate in Texas, and have heard many discussions. While there seem to be at least ninety varying accounts to every hundred men, the most popular one down there is to the effect that the American soldiers, encamped before Monterey during the war with Mexico, gathered nightly about their campfires and sang "the green grass grows all around, all around; the *green grows* all around." Then the Mexicans, listening, would shrug their shoulders, blow out a puff of smoke and murmur unpleasant wishes as to the future residence of the Americanos, or attempt to mock them. The two words "green grows" were the most outstanding of the song to the spiggoties, so the story runs, and gradually they evolved the single word "grin-go" from the two.

One night last February, there were several of us, Americans and English, gathered about the long table in the patio of Lupone's Hotel in Managua, and the talk, after touching lightly on everything from mosquitares to the appetite of fresh-water sharks (those in the Gran Lago de Nicaragua, incidentally) came to Mr. Miller's subject. I rose and made my bow (figuratively) and related the above. An old-timer—of Texas and C. A., both, incidentally—nodded when I had done, and indorsed my tale. Now, history—which I've never looked up in the matter—could probably determine much of the truth of this story, by checking up on the date and wording of the old song.

EX-CUSE for taking up so much of your time, but I put in some interesting months in the Five Republics, and mention of them set me off. Incidentally, if ever any of the Camp-Fire company wander into Managua, they'll find a circle of mighty good scouts in Lupone's *patio* most any night. Or, if they should ramble into La Union, Salvador, there's one of the most ardent Camp-Fire fans I know in the person of Mr. E. A. Westin, the Panamanian Consul. He has a vivid bunch of yarns, and some day, when I'm rich enough to develop nervous prostration and be believed, I'll hie me down to La Union and sprawl in a *hamaca* in his *patio* and let him tell me some more about the pirate stronghold on Miengarez Island in the Gulf of Fonseca. (He'll probably murder me for dragging him into the firelight this-a-way, but I'd like all of you to know him as I do. Salud! Mr. Westin!)—EUGENE CUNNINGHAM.

New York City,
December 16, 1920

As a reader of the *Adventure* from the first number, I believe I can venture on giving Mr. T. S. Miller some information as to the word "gringo."

Let him, however, get it out of his head that it is a word of recent origin, used in Mexico to designate Americans. It is an old word, very probably coming from the Catalan branch of the Spanish language, used colloquially everywhere Spanish is spoken, to designate foreign-speaking people, exactly as "barbarian" was used by the old Greek to designate those nation who spoke not Greek.

WE FIRST came in contact on a large scale with Spanish-speaking people during the Mexican War. And it was then that we heard the word as applied to us, and, naturally, thought it newly coined for our benefit. But in South America it is used to designate Italians and English, they being more numerous than other foreigners.

You have heard the phrase—"It is all Greek to me!" Well, gringo has just that meaning—strange; foreign; unknown. Some have derived the word from *gricgo*—Greek—to connote something outlandish. But I believe it to be a good, colloquial, provincial word, most probably derived from the Catalan.

Subjoined I give the definitions found in some dictionaries that I have, viz.

A. Cuyas:
"Spanish-English—English-Spanish."

Gringo: m. crrup. of *griego; hablar en gringo*, to talk gibberish; (Sp.-Am.) nickname given to foreigners, especially English and Americans.

Feliz Ramos y Duarte:
"Diccionario de Mejicanismos."

Gringo (*D.F.*), *sm. El natural de los Estados Unidos del Norte. Se le dice gringo por no entendersele; como si le dijera griego. En CATALAN "gringo" es "llanguatge que no s'enten"* (*Labernia: Dicc. Catalan*).

M. Rodriguez y Navas:
"Diccionario Completo de la Lenguage Espanola."

Gringo—adj—fig—fam—Incomprensible: m—vulg—Apodo que se daal que hablar una lenguage extrana: En la America Meridional llama asi la plebe a todos los extrangeros, senaladamente a los italianos: Hablar en gringo—fr—hablar en griego: Corrupcion de griego.

J. M. Lopes and E. R. Bensley:
"Nuevo Diccionario Ingles-Espanol y Espanol-Ingles."

Gringo: adj—colloq—Unintelligible; gibberish; as applied to language.

I'd advise Mr. Miller to search several dictionaries, old ones of the 18th Century, or of the first two decades of the 19th, and preferably dictionaries of provincialisms, and those of the Catalan tongue. Try an old edition of the dictionary of the Real Academia.—WM. H. HALE.

Los Angeles, California
January, 17th, 1921

When I was very young I heard from some of the men that served in the Mexican War that the word had its beginning in a song that the Yankee soldiers sang at that time. The chorus contained this line: "Green grows the laurel, red the rose," but all that the Mexis could make out of it was "green goes"—hence the name "gringos."

I think that theory of the origin of the word something more than reasonable. The Mexicans are more than liable to tack a word like that on to a people as a name. Witness the Pershing campaign against Villa. In a few weeks after the Yanks had crossed the Rio Grande, the Mexis were referring to them as the "meesters" from the custom of American officers addressing each other as "mister."—JOHN STATHEM.

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These services of *Adventure* are free to any one. They involve much time, work and expense on our part, but we offer them gladly and ask in return only that you **read and observe the simple rules,** thus saving needless delay and trouble for us. The whole spirit of the magazine is one of friendliness. No formality between editors and readers. Whenever we can help we're ready and willing to try. **Remember: Magazines are made up ahead of time. Allow for two or three months between sending and publication.**

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This office, assuming no responsibility, will be glad to act as a forwarding address for its readers or to hold mail till called for, provided necessary postage is supplied. Unclaimed mail which we have held for a long period is listed on the last page of the last issue of each month.

Missing Friends or Relatives

Our free service department "Lost Trails" in the pages following, though frequently used in cases where detective agencies, newspapers, and all other methods have failed, or for finding people long since dead, has located a very high percentage of those inquired for. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

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The Boston Magazine Exchange, 109 *Mountfort St., Boston, Mass., can supply* Adventure *back through* 1918, *and occasional copies before that.*

WILL SELL: All of 1918 except Mid-Jan., Feb., and First March issues. All of 1919 except Mid-Feb. and First March. All of 1920 and 1921. In good condition; not less than one year's issue sold.—Address NORBA WM. GUERIN, 112 East 18th St., Connersville, Ind.

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When submitting a manuscript, if you write a letter concerning it, enclose it *with* the manuscript; do *not* send it under separate cover. Enclose stamped and addressed envelope for return. All manuscripts should be typewritten double-spaced, with wide margins, not rolled, name and address on first page. We assume no risk for manuscripts or illustrations submitted, but use all due care while they are in our hands. Payment on acceptance.

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Our Camp-Fire is extending its Stations all over the world. Any one belongs who wishes to. Any member desiring to meet those who are still hitting the trails may maintain a Station in his home or shop where wanderers may call and receive such hospitality as the Keeper wishes to offer. The only requirements are that the Station display the regular sign, provide a box for mail to be called for and keep the regular register book and maintain his Station in good repute. Otherwise Keepers run their Stations to suit themselves and are not responsible to this magazine or representative of it. List of Stations and further details are published in the Camp-Fire in the first issue of each month.

Camp-Fire Buttons

To be worn on lapel of coat by members of Camp-Fire—any one belongs who wishes to. Enameled in dark colors representing earth, sea and sky, and bears the numeral 71—the sum of the letters of the word Camp-Fire valued according to position in the alphabet. Very small and inconspicuous. Designed to indicate the common interest which is the only requisite for membership in Camp-Fire and to enable members to recognize each other when they meet in far places or at home. Twenty-five cents, post-paid, anywhere.

When sending for the button enclose a strong, self-addressed, *un*stamped envelope.

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General Questions from Readers

In addition to our free service department "Ask Adventure" on the pages following, *Adventure* can sometimes answer other questions within our general field. When it can, it will. Expeditions and employment excepted.

Expeditions and Employment

While we should like to be of aid in these matters, experience has shown that it is not practicable.

Addresses

Camp-Fire—Any one belongs who wishes to.

Rifle Clubs—Address Nat. Rifle Assn' of America, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Washington, D. C.

(*See also under "Standing Information" in "Ask Adventure."*)

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Ask Adventure

A Free Question and Answer Service Bureau of Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere and Upon the Various Commodities Required Therein. Conducted for *Adventure* Magazine by Our Staff of Experts.

QUESTIONS should be sent, not to this office, but direct to the expert in charge of the section in whose field it falls. So that service may be as prompt as possible, he will answer you by mail direct. But he will also send to us a copy of each question and answer, and from these we shall select those of most general interest and publish them each issue in this department, thus making it itself an exceedingly valuable standing source of practical information. Unless otherwise requested inquirer's name and town are printed with question; street numbers not given.

When you ask for *general* information on a given district or subject the expert may give you some valuable general pointers and refer you to books or to local or special sources of information.

Our experts will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assumes any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible. These experts have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a given commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

1. **Service free to anybody, provided stamped and addressed envelop is enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.**
2. **Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular department whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine.**
3. **No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.**
4. **Make your questions definite and specific. State exactly your wants, qualifications and intentions. Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.**
5. **Send no question until you have read very carefully the exact ground covered by the particular expert in whose section it seems to belong.**

1. The Sea Part 1
BERIAH BROWN, 1624 Biegelow Ave., Olympia, Wash. Ships, seamen and shipping; nautical history, seamanship, navigation, yachting, small-boat sailing; commercial fisheries of North America; marine bibliography of U. S.; fishing-vessels of the North Atlantic and Pacific banks. (*See next section.*)

2. ★ The Sea Part 2
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, Hamilton, Bermuda. Questions on the sea, ships and men local to the British Empire go to Captain Dingle, not Mr. Brown. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

3. ★ Islands and Coasts
CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, Hamilton, Bermuda. Islands of Indian and Atlantic oceans; the Mediterranean; Cape Horn and Magellan Straits. Ports, trade, peoples, travel. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

4. ★ New Zealand and the South Sea Islands Part 1
TOM L. MILLS, *The Feilding Star*, Feilding, New Zealand. New Zealand, Cook Islands, Samoa. Travel, history, customs; adventure, exploring, sport. (*Postage 8 cents.*)

5. South Sea Islands Part 2
CHARLES BROWN, JR., 213 E St., San Rafael, Calif. French Oceania (Tahiti, the Society; Paumoto, Marquesas); Islands of Western Pacific (Solomons, New Hebrides, Fiji, Tonga); of Central Pacific (Guam, Ladrone, Pelew, Caroline, Marshall, Gilbert, Ellice); of the Detached (Wallis, Penrhyn, Danger, Easter, Rotuma, Futuna, Pitcairn). Natives, history, travel, sports, equipment, climate, living conditions, commerce, pearling, vanilla and coconut culture.

6. ★ Australia and Tasmania
ALBERT GOLDIE, Sydney Press Club, 51 Elizabeth St., Sydney, Australia. Customs, resources, travel, hunting, sports, history. (*Postage 5 cents.*)

7. Malaysia, Sumatra and Java
FAY-COOPER COLE, Ph. D., Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Ill. Hunting and fishing, exploring, commerce, natives, history, institutions.

8. New Guinea
DR. ALBERT BUELL LEWIS, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Ill. Hunting and fishing, exploring, commerce, natives, history, institutions.

9. Philippine Islands
BUCK CONNOR, P. O. Box 202, Hollywood, Calif. History, natives, topography, customs, travel, hunting, fishing, minerals, agriculture, commerce.

10. Hawaiian Islands and China
F. J. HALTON, 103 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill. Customs, travel, natural history, resources, agriculture, fishing, hunting.

11. Japan
GRACE P. T. KNUDSON, Castine, Me. Commerce, politics, people, customs, history, geography, travel, agriculture, art, curios.

12. Asia, Southern
CAPTAIN BEVERLEY GIDDINGS, 1315 Josephine St., New Orleans, La. Arabia, Persia, India, Tibet, Burma, western China, Borneo. Hunting, exploring, traveling, customs.

13. Africa Part 1
THOMAS S. MILLER, Carmel, Monterey Co., Calif. Gold, Ivory and Fever Coasts of West Africa, Niger River to Jebba, northern Nigeria. Canoeing, labor, trails, trade, expenses, outfitting, flora, tribal histories, witchcraft.

14. ★ Africa Part 2 Transvaal, N. W. and Southern Rhodesia, British East, Uganda and the Upper Congo.
CHARLES BEADLE, Ile de Lerne, par Vannes, Morbihan, Brittany, France. Geography, hunting, equipment, trading, climate, transport, customs, living conditions, witchcraft, adventure and sport. (*Postage 12 cents.*)

★ *(Enclose addressed envelop with 5 cents—in Mr. Beadle's case 12 cents—in stamps NOT attached)*

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15. Africa Part 3 Cape Colony, Orange River Colony, Natal and Zululand
CAPTAIN F. J. FRANKLIN, care Adventurers' Club of Chicago, 40 South Clark St., Chicago, Ill. Climate, shooting and fishing, imports and exports; health resorts, minerals, direct shipping routes from U. S., living conditions, travel, opportunities for employment. Free booklets on: Orange-growing, apple-growing, sugar-growing, maize-growing; viticulture; sheep and fruit ranching.

16. ✠ Africa Part 4 Portuguese East
R. G. WARING, Corunna, Ontario, Canada. Trade, produce, climate, opportunities, game, wild life, travel, expenses, outfits, health, etc. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

17. Africa Part 5 Morocco
GEORGE E. HOLT, Frederick, Md. Travel, tribes, customs, history, topography, trade.

18. Africa Part 6 Tripoli
CAPTAIN BEVERLEY GIDDINGS, 1315 Josephine Street, New Orleans, La. Including the Sahara Tuaregs and caravan routes. Traveling, exploring, customs, caravan trade.

19. Africa Part 7 Egypt and Barbary States
J. L. BINDA, National Foreign Trade Council, 1 Hanover Sq., New York. Egypt and Sudan, Tunis, Algeria. Travel, history, ancient and modern; monuments, languages, races, customs, commerce.

20. Turkey and Asia Minor
J. L. BINDA, National Foreign Trade Council, 1 Hanover Sq., New York. Travel, history, geography, races, languages, customs, trade opportunities.

21. Balkans
J. L. BINDA, National Foreign Trade Council, 1 Hanover Sq., New York. Greece, Albania, Jugo-Slavia, Bulgaria, Roumania. Travel, history, topography, languages, customs, trade opportunities.

22. South America Part 1
EDGAR YOUNG, care *Adventure*. Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile. Geography, inhabitants, history, industries, topography, minerals, game, languages, customs.

23. South America Part 2
P. H. GOLDSMITH, *Inter-American Magazine*, 407 West 117th St., New York, N. Y. Venezuela, the Guianas, Brazil (except Pará and Amazonas), Uruguay, Paraguay and Argentine Republic. Travel, history, customs, industries, topography, natives, languages, hunting and fishing.

24. South America Part 3
ALGOT LANGE, care *Adventure*. Pará and Amazonas, Brazil. Topography, customs, hunting, fishing, agriculture, lumber, industry, climate and health.

25. Central America
CHARLES BELL EMERSON, 90 So. Orchard St., San José, Calif. Canal Zone, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, British Honduras, Salvador, Guatemala. Travel, languages, game, conditions, minerals, trading.

26. Mexico Part 1 Northern
J. W. WHITEAKER, 1505 W. 10th St., Austin, Tex. Border States of old Mexico—Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas. Minerals, lumbering, agriculture, travel, customs, topography, climate, natives, hunting, history, industries.

27. Mexico Part 2 Southern; and Lower California
C. R. MAHAFFEY, Topolobampo, Sinaloa, Mexico. Lower California; Mexico south of a line from Tampico to Mazatlan. Mining, agriculture, topography, travel, hunting, lumbering, history, natives, business and general conditions.

28. ✠ Canada Part 1
S. E. SANGSTER ("Canuck"), L. B. 393, Ottawa, Canada. Height of Land and northern Quebec and Ontario (except strip between Minn. and C. P. Ry.); southeastern Ungava and Keewatin. Sport, canoe routes, big game, fish, fur; equipment; Indian life and habits; Hudson's Bay Co. posts; minerals, timber, customs regulations. No questions answered on trapping for profit. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

29. ✠ Canada Part 2
HARRY M. MOORE, Deseronto, Ont., Canada. Ottawa Valley and southeastern Ontario. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, mining, lumbering, agriculture, topography, travel, camping, aviation. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

30. ✠ Canada Part 3
GEORGE L. CATTON, Tweed, Ont., Canada. Georgian Bay and southern Ontario. Fishing, hunting, trapping, canoeing. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

31. Canada Part 4
T. F. PHILLIPS, Department of Science, Duluth Central High School, Duluth, Minn. Hunters Island and English River district. Fishing, camping, hunting, trapping, canoeing, climate, topography, travel.

32. Canada Part 5
ED. L. CARSON, La Connor, Wash. Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta including Peace River district; to Great Slave Lake. Outfits and equipment, guides, big game, minerals, forest, prairie; travel; customs regulations.

33. ✠ Canada Part 6
REECE H. HAGUE, The Pas, Manitoba, Canada. Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Mackenzie and northern Keewatin. Homesteading, mining, hunting, trapping, lumbering and travel. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

34. ✠ Canada Part 7
JAS. F. B. BELFORD, Codrington, Ont., Canada. New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and southeastern Quebec. Hunting, fishing, lumbering, camping, trapping, auto and canoe trips, history, topography, farming, homesteading, mining, paper industry, water-power. (*Postage 3 cents.*)

35. Alaska
THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 2837 Fulton St., Berkeley, Calif. Arctic life and travel; boats, packing, back-packing, traction, transport, routes; equipment, clothing, food; physics, hygiene; mountain work.

36. Western U. S. Part 1
E. E. HARRIMAN, 2303 W. 23rd St., Los Angeles, Calif. California, Oregon, Washington, Utah, Nevada, Arizona. Game, fur, fish; camp, cabin; mines, minerals,; mountains.

37. Western U. S. Part 2
J. W. WHITEAKER, 1505 W. 10th St., Austin, Tex. Texas and Oklahoma. Minerals, agriculture, travel, topography, climate, hunting, history, industries.

38. Middle Western U. S. Part 1
JOSEPH MILLS HANSON (lately Capt. A. E. F.), care *Adventure*. The Dakotas, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas. Hunting, fishing, travel. Especially, early history of Missouri Valley.

39. Middle Western U. S. Part 2
JOHN B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Missouri, Arkansas and the Missouri Valley up to Sioux City, Iowa. Wilder countries of the Ozarks, and swamps; hunting, fishing, trapping, farming, mining and range lands; big-timber sections.

40. Middle Western U. S. Part 3
J. B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Lake Michigan. Fishing, clamming, hunting, trapping, lumbering, canoeing, camping, guides, outfits, motoring, agriculture, minerals, natural history, early history, legends.

41. Eastern U. S. Part 1
RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Little Falls, N. Y. Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Michigan and Hudson valleys; Great Lakes, Adirondacks. Automobile, motorcycle, bicycle and pedestrian touring; shanty-boating; river tripping; outfit suggestions, including those for the transcontinental trails; game, fish and woodcraft; furs, fresh-water pearls, herbs, and their markets.

42. Eastern U. S. Part 2
HOWARD A. SHANNON, *Alexandria Gazette*, Alexandria, Va. Motor-boat and canoe cruising on Delaware and Chesapeake Bays and tributary rivers. Motor-boat equipment and management. Oystering, crabbing, eeling, black bass, pike, sea-trout, croakers; general fishing in tidal waters. Trapping and trucking on Chesapeake Bay. Water fowl and upland game in Maryland and Virginia. Early history of Delaware, Virginia and Maryland.

43. Eastern U. S. Part 3
HAPSBURG LIEBE, Orlando, Fla. Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, N. and S. Carolina, Florida and Georgia except Tennessee River and Atlantic seaboard. Hunting, fishing, camping; logging, lumbering, sawmilling, saws.

44. Eastern U. S. Part 4
DR. G. E. HATHORNE, 79 Main Street, Bangor, Me. Maine. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, guides, outfits, supplies.

WEAPONS, PAST and PRESENT

Rifles, shotguns, pistols, revolvers, ammunition and edged weapons. (Any questions on the arms adapted to a particular locality should *not* be sent to this department but to the "Ask Adventure" editor covering the district.)

A.—All Shotguns, including foreign and American makes; wing shooting. J. B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

B.—All Rifles, Pistols and Revolvers, including foreign and American makes. DONEGAN WIGGINS, R. F. D. 3, Lock Box 75, Salem, Ore.

C.—Edged Weapons, and Firearms Prior to 1800. Swords, pikes, knives, battle-axes, etc., and all firearms of the flintlock, matchlock, wheel-lock and snaphaunce varieties. LEWIS APPLETON BARKER, 40 University Road, Brookline, Mass.

✠ *(Enclose addressed envelop with 3 cents in stamps NOT attached)*

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OLD SONGS THAT MEN HAVE SUNG

ROBERT FROTHINGHAM, 745 Riverside Drive, New York City. A department for collecting hitherto unpublished specimens and for answering questions concerning all songs of the out-of-doors that have had sufficient virility to outlast their immediate day; chanteys, "forebitters," ballads —songs of outdoor men—sailors, lumberjacks, soldiers, cowboys, pioneers, rivermen, canal-men, men of the Great Lakes, voyageurs, railroad men, miners, hoboes, plantation hands, etc.

FISHING IN NORTH AMERICA

Salt and Fresh Water Fishing

J. B. THOMPSON, 906 Pontiac Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Covering fishing-tackle and equipment; fly and bait casting and bait; camping-outfits; fishing-trips.

MOUNTAINS and MOUNTAINEERING

Especially of New England. ARTHUR BENT, Appalachian Mountain Club, 1050 Tremont Bldg., Boston, Mass.

STANDING INFORMATION

For information on trade in any part of the world, address J. L. BINDA, National Foreign Trade Council, 1 Hanover Sq., New York.

For general information on U. S. and its possessions, write Supt. of Public Documents, Wash., D. C., for catalog of all Government publications.

For the Philippines, Porto Rico, and customs receiverships in Santo Domingo and Haiti, the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Dept., Wash., D. C.

For Alaska, the Alaska Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Central Bldg., Seattle, Wash.

For Hawaii, Hawaii Promotion Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Honolulu, T. H. Also, Dept. of the Interior, Wash., D. C.

For Cuba, Bureau of Information, Dept. of Agri., Com. and Labor, Havana, Cuba.

The Pan-American Union may be called upon for general information relating to Latin-American matters or for specific data. Address L. S. ROWE, Dir. Gen., Wash., D. C.

For R. C. M. P., Commissioner Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa, Can. Only unmarried British subjects, age 18 to 40, above 5 ft. 8 in. and under 175 lbs.

For Canal Zone, the Panama Canal Com., Wash., D. C.

For U. S., its possessions and most foreign countries, the Dept. of Com., Wash., D. C.

Buried Treasure

TWO lurid tales, and two buckets of cold water:

Question:—"I do not know whom to ask for the following information as it does not come in under any department head.

I heard an old sailor talking of the treasure of Morgan the pirate. He claims that the island of Old Providence belonging to Colombia contains this treasure.

He states that this island has a hill or rock split in half; the treasure rests at base of split in rock. It can be seen, according to the natives, but not reached.

He says that the Colombian Government will not allow any one to try to secure this treasure. Can you kindly give me any information on same?" —D. J. GIDDENS, Mobile, Ala.

Answer, by Capt. Dingle:—The most authentic story of buried pirates' treasure is that of Cocos Island, which has been honored by a quest organized by a powerful Government. If Costa Rica is willing to give permission to expedition after expedition, knowing that any discovery will be to its own advantage, doesn't it seem foolish for Colombia to refuse similar permission in Old Providence if there is the remotest chance of the story proving true?

There are a hundred stories of fabulous wealth buried by pirates. Few have any foundation stouter than the imaginations of the creators.

Morgan, according to all history—and he was, of them all, the greatest freebooter—was not at all the sort of man to pitch his loot down into a crack where it could not be reached. Whenever he felt like lying low for awhile he divided the loot, fifty-fifty, which meant in his language half to himself and half among the several hundred of his dupes, then left his mates to shift for themselves, carrying away the choicest of his wealth and as much of theirs as he could swipe at the farewell. That he lived his later years wealthy and quite able to equip expeditions, even protected by Government, to recover any treasure he had hidden away, seems evidence enough to me that there is mighty little of Sir Harry Morgan's loot lying around anywhere.

Flog the rubbish out of these yarns of treasure, and get to thinking for yourself. You can very easily find out whether Colombia refuses permission to search on Old Providence. Write to the Minister for the Interior, Bogota, Colombia, and ask him. He'll reply all right.

Question:—"I would like to have some information about the Fortune Island in the Bahamas. I would like to get a map of that island if possible. I saw in another magazine that some pirates are supposed to have left their booty valued at six million dollars at that island. I would like information on that subject if you happen to have any." —PRIV. DONOVAN BROWNFIELD, Fort Bliss, Tex.

Answer, by Capt. Dingle:—Fortune Island, or as it is called now, Long Cay, to the southward of Crooked Island, has in common with almost every cay in the Bahamas been spoken of as the repository of fabulous treasure left by pirates and buccaneers. To the best of my knowledge whatever there is on Fortune Island is not much, except the treasure which is being constantly taken out of the salt pans and shipped away in small schooners.

There is a town there, Albert, and men have lived there a long time. It would seem that any treasure would have been sought and found long since, if ever there. But I don't pose as an oracle on the authenticity of buried treasures, and you may have the right dope. I believe you can secure a recent chart by writing to the Hydrographic Office of the Navy, Washington, D. C. I'm not sure what the cost will be, but not more than 40 or 50 cents, I know.

Personally I would not care to spend a hundred dollars in a search for that six millions, though I have gone on a hunt once or twice. It's true that formerly Fortune Island was used as a rendezvous for the wreckers working to windward, but they were not likely to leave much behind, and as for pirates I have not heard anything which sounds authentic about an unfound hoard of wealth. Look up some books—rather old ones—on the Bahamas in your nearest library.

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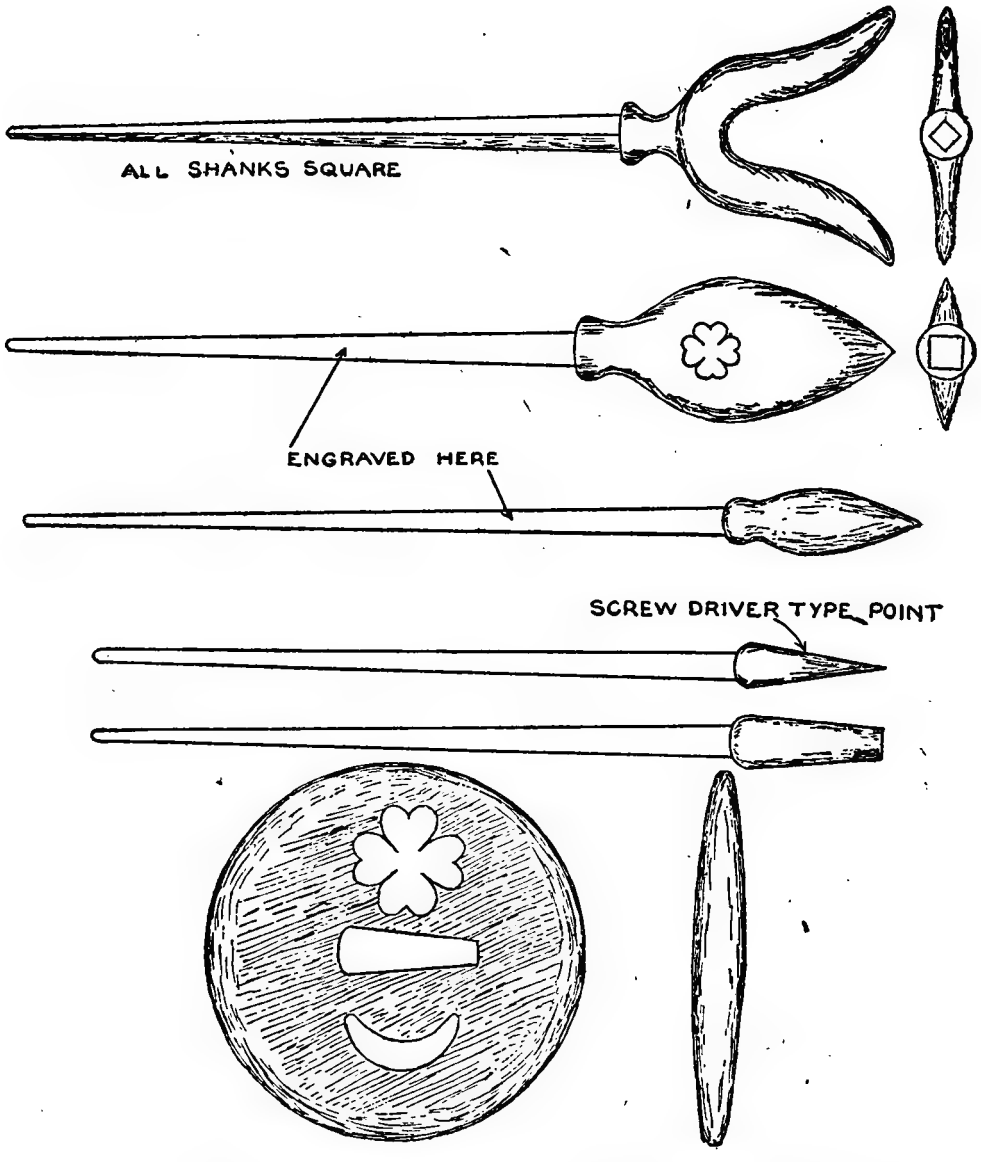

Kogai

A MOST interesting appanage to the equipment of the *Samurai:*

Question:—"My collection of Japanese curios consists of 50 Japanese iron arrow-heads and one iron sword-guard. They are in fair condition, and are of the same style and design as those exhibited in the Japanese Arms and Armor Group in the Museum of Natural History in New York City. Am enclosing a rough sketch of a few pieces.

1. Have these any historial connection or value?
2. For what purpose were they made?
3. What is their approximate age?
4. What is their approximate market value?
5. To whom might one sell this collection?
6. Have any books been published in which similar collections have been listed?"—ROBERT W. BURGESS, New Brunswick, N. J.

Answer, by Mrs. Knudson:—It is a pleasure to read a letter so definitely to the point as is yours of recent date. Before answering your questions I would suggest that, judging from your drawings, you have a collection of *kogai* rather than arrow-heads. Have you been told that they are arrow-heads?

1. Such articles have a uniquely historial connection with the old feudalism of Japan, and many of them now in authentic collections are of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The feudal

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system of Japan, existing as an established political institution, dates from the latter part of the twelfth century and comes down practically to the year 1867. Under this system the Mikado was theoretical head of the state, but the power of government was in the hands of the Shogun, or "Generalissimo." Then in rank came the *Daimios*, mostly hereditary princes and heads of the provinces, and their *Samurai*, or clan of fighting men. The sword was poetically referred to as "the soul of the *Samurai.*" In the sixteenth century one of the Shoguns of the Ashikaga family made the wearing of two swords obligatory for both *Daimios* and *Samurai*, as a part of the outfit of their rank. And then came a period of comparative peace when this idle military class gave great attention to their personal outfit, whose enrichment with ornamentation often showed the rank and taste of the wearer.

2. Besides the sword and scabbard there were five smaller "sword belongings" upon which craft and art were expended. The sword-guard was one. This was generally a flat, round or oval piece of metal used to guard the hand from the point of an opposing blade. It was pierced with three apertures, one large for the blade to go through. The two smaller apertures were for a small dagger, sheathed on one side of the blade, and the *kogai*, a long, pointed sort of skewer. Authorities differ as to the use of this *kogai*. Some say it was merely a hair ornament of the *Samurai*, others that it was thrust into the body of a slain opponent as the personal "sign of the slayer." The *kogai* you have drawn undoubtedly goes with the sword-guard having the aperture of a corresponding shape. The engraving is probably the name of the maker.

3. I can't tell you the age of your collection without closely examining them. They might be anywhere from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, or they might be modern imitations. If they are of iron and "ring" clearly they are probably antiques.

4. Value would depend upon age, material, workmanship, inscriptions, etc.

5. Some high-class Oriental curio dealer. I can give you a list of such if you desire.

6. There have been such books, mostly English or Continental auction lists. You might get hold of something through Orientalia shop, 22 East 60th Street, New York City.

Chicago to California by Auto

LOTS of people are planning it these days. If you're thinking of it yourself, be sure to read this before preparing for your start next Spring or Summer. Mr. Spears knows:

Question:—"We are two couple, and we wish to make a trip to California in a machine. As we are greenhorns, I wrote to Mr. E. E. Harriman for pointers; he sent us a fine letter of information, but said to write you, as you and your family had made the trip and could give us some first-hand help.

I will try and not weary you with too many questions, but there is so much we would like to know, as it's just like a plunge in the dark to us.

We of course want to make a pleasure trip and have plenty of time, but not so much money; so of course the first we would like to know is, an idea about how much it would cost at the lowest; I mean for actual expenses on the trip for four adults. We would use tent and cook our meals; in fact we want to just camp it, not live in hotels and luxury.

Mr. Harriman tells me the mileage is 2,265 miles from Chicago. Would it be asking too much to give us a detailed description of your trip—the towns you traversed and side trips of interest such as Yellowstone Park, Grand Cañon and Colorado Rockies; or would that cover too much?

Now particularly what provisions would one take, such as canned goods, etc., and as little as possible? How did you find chances for buying eggs, milk, butter, bread and vegetables on the way, and about what is the longest distance between towns and gas stations? Will a Dodge Bros. car be all right; and what about taking extra parts along? Can we take a revolver for protection and a shotgun or rifle for hunting; and what kind of a license must one have?

What is the best route, and where can we get a map of same? How long did it take you from west of Chicago? Can you estimate cost per day for gas and eating? What is the best time of year to start, and how did you provide for sleeping?

We would like to land in San Francisco and then on down to Los Angeles.

Now any pointers for economizing or side trips or anything will be greatly appreciated, and if I am asking too much please forgive an overenthusiastic bunch of greenhorn campers."—Mrs. Annette Pitcher and Bunch, Chicago, Ill.

Answer, by Mr. Spears:—We drove a Studebaker 6, Little Falls to San Francisco-Los Angeles, *via* Chicago (lost on Michigan Ave! Ought to have gone out Washington, I think.) Followed Lincoln Highway to Omaha, Denver *via* O-L-D, then hit-or-miss to Salt Lake City. Lincoln Highway to San Francisco.

You want Yellowstone. Therefore take Yellowstone Trail. I've been on it to near Montana line. Nothing to bother except wet weather. Just follow sign-posts. Have State maps highways. Rand-McNally (go to store in Chicago). Get full set there of State highway maps, Illinois, Minnesota, N. D., S. D., Montana, Utah, Nevada, California. Look these over. Don't be bound too closely by the maps, however, cutting out to avoid bad roads, as warned by garage and gas-filling stations. We crossed the Rockies jump by jump, after bad washouts, running a few hundred miles up and down to avoid bad places.

Figure about 80 miles a day, average. Take your time. Be sure and have Dodge car radiator pump system carefully adjusted for hot weather and high altitude. We followed Dodge with two adults, four children, 1,000 lbs. luggage from Ely, Nev., to Frisco. Motor heated, but they made it O.K. No troubles, except tires. Put on cords, half-inch oversize, rib tread—Goodyear, Goodrich, I think best. We found so anyhow.

Your car makes about 18 to 20 miles, gallon gas. Therefore perhaps 120 gallons gas. Oil, qt. to 75 miles, or less. Carry gal. can of best oil, spare. Have vaporizer fitted on car. Take quart fruit-can, glass, 3-16 inch pipe, gasoline prime cup —90 cts. worth material.

Gasoline, probably 20 cts. to 60 cts. gallon. Probably better carry can of gasoline. We didn't. But filled every pump on the way. Gasoline

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sometimes 60 miles to 80 miles filling-station to filling-station. Better carry two spare tires and tubes on rims. Start with new tires, or throw away old ones as soon as have any trouble with them. Saves time. Carry patching-outfit.

Carry tools for fixing things—files, hacksaw, ax, plenty of trot-line for tying things on (sporting store). Have two small tents. Ground clothes. 4 single folding cots. Grid to cook on over open fire. Small two-burner gasoline stove. Woolen blanket each. Long ulster cloaks. Heavy shoes, Oxfords (slippers). Wear woolen (light) skirts—very long hem. Look out for stays or garments that jab or chafe. Pack all good clothes in dust-tight bags. Have dark (gray, or dull-colored) waists. I liked knickerbockers, long stockings, light 50c or dollar shirts, gray or khaki, and Army shoes (I'm heavy man). Also, canvas (not water-proofed) shoes. Oxfords to drive in, hot weather.

Take your time. Everybody I saw who hurried smashed springs, etc. We drove less than 10 miles an hour beyond Rockies; no trouble. Never faster than 20 miles on strange roads—we saw two hundred smashed cars, because of fast driving over strange roads.

Carry six gallons of water in running-board cans. We burned 5 gals. one day in radiator on desert—2 qts. week east of Chicago. Oil the springs with engine oil mixed wih gasoline (half and half). Have oil-can for this. Keep cups full of grease; turn down every day.

Cost is what you make it. Carry two days' provisions, or perhaps a week if you camp in parks or woods. Buy supplies at towns. Carry too much load, you have trouble. Put eye-bolts in running-board, heavy washers, and lash outfit to these. Tent-rolls lashed with ⅜-inch or half-inch manila rope across back of car. Learn from other campers.

Look over the nesting cooking-outfits for automobiles, all in one case. Carry things in bags, rather than boxes. Tie stuff up with one rope. Then tie onto the car with another. Draw tight and watch! If don't, you'll lose a lot of things.

Firearms: I'd say a .22-caliber rifle, Remington single shot, Winchester .22 caliber special, a .25-20 carbine Winchester, a .25-35 carbine if you allow to shoot a coyote or wolf or wild horse or bear, cougar, etc. You may see big game. Get Game Laws, Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. (all States in a pamphlet). Carry fishing-rod with flies, bait, hooks, etc., if you want to fish. You'll find U. S. Dept. of Agriculture books on Yellowstone National Park worth asking for, too. Free.

Rifle will kill you some open-season game—rabbits, etc. Probably not enough to pay for them. I carried a .22 automatic Colt's pistol. If you are held up—there's no chance to speak of—don't fight. You'll be killed up, for they are bad, desperate—fine shots usually. .22 is fine for snakes, but we drove 14,000 miles, didn't see but one—dead rattler.

Now about the cost. We were gone a year. We stopped 7 months in a bungalow over Winter—$25 month at coast beach (Hermosa). I figured it cost us about $100 a week for four on the highways. This included hundreds of 2¼ x 3¼ photographs. You'd better carry a vest-pocket camera, and take 100 rolls of film. It'll cost $60 or $80, but you'll never regret this expense for camera pictures. Take everything!

If you eat plain food, don't smash up by hurrying; buying bread, but cooking vegetables, steering clear of the expensive cakes and pies, you can go through for cost of eating at home. Some places high, some low. But you can take on things that will keep where you find them cheap; and in Utah in fruit season, for example, you'll buy peaches around $1 a bushel. Look out for fire in any woods or forests. It means prison to start a fire carelessly.

You will be about 30 to 40 days from Chicago *via* Yellowstone, Salt Lake City, to San Francisco. You ought not to have to touch your car, except oil and grease and filling tanks, from Chicago to San Francisco! Start in first-class condition! Lay over every week for overhauling, for washing clothes (in foot-tub of granite ware, say) one day. Keep each part of outfit by itself, tent wrapping, bedding. Cots in bags, lashed on running-boards. Balance the load.

A little cupboard for grub, an auto cooking-outfit and dishes, nesting. Ship any extras. Have mail held 30 days.

Carry folding dressmakers' table or camp-table; have kindergarten chairs, substantial. Canvas ones tear unless better than most.

For ground-clothes, use large water-proof blankets of canvas.

Don't paint your tent, but have it waterproofed. Have tents for each side of the car, but separate.

Give the other fellow the road. Always have plenty of water. One can for good water, to drink; other for any alkali, gyp or other water that may be necessary to use in motor or vaporizer.

Eat main meal at midday; night may find you tired, hunting a camp place. Don't overdo. Stop where it looks comfortable to rest. We found two or three hours' rest at midday saved a lot of weariness—just loafed.

I'd figure on spending from $75 to $100 a week for all four. Also, if I were you, after getting all outfit, take a run of a week with the outfit out to the Mississippi and back and thus get the ropes learned first. Leave at home what don't need; keep weight under 100 lbs. per person, camp and all. We allow about 30 pounds for camping outfit each person in Adirondack packing trips. Make your own tents, if you wish, out of 8-ounce canvas or sheeting, and waterproof—cost about half as much, or less. (90 inch wide material.)

If I can help further, glad to. You'll never regret making the trip, though it breaks you!

Birds of Mexico

HERE'S a list of books that will provide good reading for those interested in ornithology:

Question:—"Could you let me know the name and address of the person or firm I could write to for a publication covering the birds in this part of the country—I would say tropical or semi-tropical birds? I am enclosing a stamped envelope for reply."—JAMES W. MANSON, Cajeme, Sonora, Mex.

Answer, by Mr. Whiteaker:—There are several books printed about the birds of Mexico as a whole, but I know of none dealing with any certain locality. Here are a few names of bookstores, publishers and

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authors that may be able to tell you what you want to know.

"Two Bird-Lovers in Mexico," by C. William Beebe, Boston.

"Through Southern Mexico (Travels of a Naturalist)" by Hans Gadow.

Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, have published many books about Mexico—on its people, birds, animals, industries and the like.

The Sonora News Co., Plaza de Zaragoza, Monterey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, handles American newspapers, books and magazines, so you may learn from them about a book dealing with the birds of your section.

American Book and Printing Co., Ave. de San Francisco, 23, Mexico City.

The Blue Bookstore, Ave. 16 de Septiembre, 14, Mexico City.

Sonora News Co., Calle de Gante, 4, Mexico City; also have stores at Nogales, Arizona; Laredo, Texas; and many of the larger cities of Mexico.

The .25-20 Winchester

MR. WIGGINS is strong for it:

Question:—"I have a model '92 Winchester .25-20 W. C. F., and should be very grateful if you would answer me the following questions:

1. What is your opinion on this rifle?
2. At what range can it be used with accuracy?
3. What kind of game can it be used for hunting?
4. What does the '20' mean in .25-20 or the '40' in .38-40 and so on? Has it to do with the weight of the bullet?

I also have a .30-40 Krag, and would like to know if I can use an adapter in it for a .32 cartridge. If I can is it advisable?"—JOHN F. C. STEVENSON, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Answer, by Mr. Wiggins:—The .25-20 Winchester is one of the nicest little guns I know of for small game and target-shooting over medium distances. I have owned and shot these rifles with great success, and know that with the high-velocity cartridge they will account for a deer or bear if properly pointed. The largest buck taken in the Oak Ridge (Oregon) district last Fall fell to a .25-20 W. H. V. The factory loads seem to be at their best for two hundred yards, but I have seen hand-loaded ammunition dropping bullets at over a thousand yards, far closer than I would want them to come toward me. Say three hundred yards for a mark the size of a fox, or coyote, is a good idea of its capabilities.

2. As stated above, while I have seen long shots made with this caliber, I favor it for three hundred yards.

3. Ducks, geese, rabbits, fox, coyote, and similar game, with deer if you can pick your shot. And one of the Dalton boys at Coffeyville is said to have been killed in the bank raid by a .25-20 rifle.

4. The '20' refers to the original powder charge of black-powder for this shell. It's now loaded with seventeen grains black and about ten, I think, of smokeless. The second numerals referred to the weight of the powder-charge in the old days, the third to the bullet-weight; thus .25-20-86, meaning 86 grains weight of lead.

5. You can use an adapter for pistol cartridges in your Krag, and have good success from it. I think you can secure a very good adapter from the Sportsman's Service Station, Tenafly, N. J. They make the best I've seen.

Address your question direct to the expert in charge, NOT to the magazine.

B. S. A. Police

HERE'S a good outfit for a go-getter to join up with:

Question:—"I am greatly interested in Rhodesia, and especially the Mounted Police of that country. I undestand there is a chance for plenty of excitement there if one so desires to look for it.

1. I would greatly appreciate any information you could give me of the Mounted Police.
2. What chance would a young American have of becoming one of them?
3. Would the fact that he spent two years in the war and was considered an expert with the Lewis machine gun in the field, be much of a help if he wished to join them?
4. Is there any other mounted police whose work and patrols are farther from civilization than the outposts of the Rhodesia Mounted?
5. Is there any occupation that you know of around there in which one would find as much or more chance for excitement?
6. What is the pay of the police?
7. Their general routine.
8. Do they patrol the outlying districts miles from civilization?
9. Is there any big game?
10. What qualifactions must one have before becoming a policeman?
11. What is their uniform?
12. Their pay?
13. Are they furnished horses free?
14. Are they recruited, or picked men?"—NORMAN BRICE, Grandfield, Okla.

Answer, by Mr. Beadle:—1. The British South African Police (Mounted) are employed by the B. S. A. Chartered Company. In the old days they used to be called the M. M. P. (Mashonaland Mounted Police). Pay was five shillings per day with rations, uniform, horse, etc. (one shilling deferred, payable on discharge). Headquarters, Buluwayo and Salisbury. Sign on for two years (but that, I think, has been extended to three years since my day).

2. I don't think there would be any restriction for an American joining; again in my day there was none. (Write for information to Secretary, B. S. A. Company, Salisbury House, London Wall, London, England.)

3. Yes, I should think your qualification with the Lewis and your war service would be a good recommendation.

4. No, the B. S. A. P. are the farthest from civilization.

5. Yes and no. One would have more fun, likely, hunting or trading away up country on your own, but that requires experience and capital.

6. Answered in Question 1.

7. General routine is stables, fatigue, fatigue, stables, varied with patrols; that is on headquarter

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stations. On outstation you have a much better time, less boring work and more patrols and liberty.

8. Yes; outstations are often miles from any white men; headquarters on long patrols also away from civilization, collecting hut taxes, general patrols, hunting cattle-thieves or murderers (rare) or other criminals.

9. Yes; in most districts any amount of game, large and small.

10. Qualifications stated as being able to ride and shoot; also not overweight or over six feet as local horses are not weight-carriers.

11. Uniform walking out, blue with overalls and box spurs; field, salt and pepper tunic braided, with riding-pants and puttees; ordinary service khaki. (These may have been changed).

12 and 13. Answered above.

14. Recruited (mostly at the Cape, South Africa).

Put at least five cents postage on all letters addressed to "Ask Adventure" editors who live outside the U. S. Always enclose at least five cents in International Reply Coupons for answer.

Motor-Launch Trip to Alaska

TO BE taken from the North Pacific coast, of course; and in Summer:

Question:—"Would like to know what you think of a motor-launch trip up the west coast, say from San Francisco through the Bering Strait. I would stick close to shore and explore the coastline. Would like to know what conditions are on the west coast. Fishing would be the main object of this trip. Would do some hunting too in Alaska and Columbia. Will have $1,000 cash besides outfit.

I have had considerable experience in the backwoods. Would like a little information with regard to ships and seamen, particularly the whalers. Launch would be 90 horse-power: will have complete outfit."—JAMES B. HOLDEN, Chagrin Falls, O.

Answer, by Mr. Beriah Brown:—For a motor-launch trip to Alaska, I would recommend that you start from Seattle rather than from San Francisco. There are few ports along the Pacific that you could make with a launch in case you got into difficulties and the weather was bad. From Seattle there is an inside passage all the way through British Columbia and far into Alaska, easily negotiable by launches. I have known a party having a delightful cruise from Seattle into southeastern Alaska, in a 25-foot cabin launch, encountering no bad weather at all, and never having to face the open sea, save in crossing Queen Charlotte Sound.

As to going farther and into Bering Sea, I certainly would not recommend any such an undertaking. You will see enough and have enough of launch travel, however, long before you get that far.

You will find all of the fishing you ever dreamed of.

Whaling on this coast has become almost entirely an offshore pursuit, the trying-out stations being on shore and the actual whaling being done from small steam vessels equipped with bomb lances and powerful enough to tow their catch back into port.

You will find all of the fishing you ever dreamed of on such a trip as I suggest, and some hunting; but remember that for hunting either in Alaska or British Columbia, licenses are required, and the game laws are severe and rigidly enforced.

Tractors for New Zealand

IF YOU know machinery you're sure to catch on in the antipodes:

Question:—"Could you oblige me by telling me what the opportunities would be for two young men, twenty-one years of age, in New Zealand, Samoa or any other neighboring places?

Have fair educations and know how to handle machinery pertaining to farm industry such as trucks, tractors, etc. Also have had experience with cattle, horses, etc."—LESLIE H. PRICE, Willitts, Calif.

Answer, by Mr. Mills:—We are using up-to-date machinery more and more on our farms in New Zealand, and tractors are becoming familiar implements in our country districts. But not any over in Samoa or the other South Sea islands. The soil isn't deep enough in those areas for heavy-weight implements. Two young men of your caliber willing to do anything to help along to the next place couldn't go wrong over here in New Zealand, especially on our farms, where the man who can turn his hand to anything, and is adept with machinery, is always welcome.

Facts about Hawaii

THERE are a quarter of a million people living there now:

Question:—"In my desire to learn somewhat of the Hawaiian Islands, I would greatly appreciate your answering the following questions:

Population of islands.

Population of Honolulu.

Steamboat fare and excursion rates from San Francisco to Honolulu.

Universities and colleges and departments of same at Honolulu or other cities on islands.

If possible, regulations governing practise of pharmacy, and whether a registered pharmacist in the U. S. is qualified to practise on the islands.

Please do not publish name."—C. F. L., Telluride, Colo.

Answer, by Mr. Halton:—The total population of the Hawaiian Islands at the last census was 250,000. The population of Honolulu is about 80,000. In figuring the population of Honolulu I have taken the city proper. As a matter of fact, the whole island of Oahu is the city and county of Honolulu.

I am sending you under separate cover booklets descriptive of the islands, and in the Primer you will find some statistics regarding the population and how it is composed regarding nationalities. Honolulu has universities and colleges which are up to date in every respect, having a faculty and curriculum equal to the mainland colleges.

The minimum fare by steamer from San Francisco to Honolulu is $110 plus eight per cent. war-tax. A round trip is double that of the single fare. I regret that I can not give you regulations governing

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the practise of pharmacy; but, it being a part of the United States, I think that a registered pharmacist would be able to practise in the Territory.

I would suggest that you write to the Secretary of the Territory at Honolulu for more detailed information. If there are any other questions that occur to you which are not specifically covered in the booklets sent you, I will be glad to hear from you.

Tsetse Fly and Sleeping Sickness

AFRICA'S contribution to the Pandora's box of pests and plagues:

Question:—"Can you give any information on the tsetse fly which inhabits the western coast of Africa? Can you tell me what part of the season they do the most harm, how they are irritated, and, if there is any cure, what it is? Are many natives of the west coast taken by this disease? Are white people affected more easily than the natives? What area are they the most active in? Is the sleeping sickness of Africa the same as in some parts of the United States?"—BUSTER MARTIN, Windham, N. Y.

Answer, by Mr. Miller:—The tsetse fly I never met with in West Africa. But then we were a wild bunch, with little knowledge of the country we were in. Still, I never heard the fly reported in West Africa, but in South and Southeast Africa. And my impression is that it does not harm human beings, but the horses and cattle are the sufferers.

In Nigeria we found that horses could not live in certain parts—in and around the Niger delta. The general idea was that they were bitten by some pest and inoculated with a disease. Hence it may have been the tsetse fly. On the other hand so many whites died, and went generally down in the death statistics as fever victims; but it is likely that they too were the victims of some of the mysterious diseases of tropical Africa. Doctors were few, with very large districts to cover, so we were all pretty much in the dark about what ailed us.

As to the sleeping sickness: This is not found on the coasts, but in the hinterlands, and is traceable to poor diet. There is much controversy over the sleeping sickness. From time to time the newspapers report that some doctor or scientist has discovered the sleeping sickness germ, but generally nothing further is heard.

In Sokoto we found it often followed bad harvests and semi-starvation. It is kindred to beriberi, which broke out in Ireland a few years ago, and was put down to poor food and dirt. Whether the so-called sleeping sickness in the United States is actually the sleeping sickness of Africa is not yet decided.

You ask if white people are as easily affected as the natives. No. Most curiously, the whites escape much of the ills that affect the African. Our variety of food and higher ways of living have lifted us out of the plane—or zone, it might be called—of certain bacteria. We have more resistance; though the contrary notion is generally believed—that the savages are healthier than civilized peoples. Whites have more will resistance, stronger desire to live, and are less inclined to fatalistically surrender.

Though the blacks are immune to malaria, which takes off so many whites, it is with them a case of the "survival of the fittest," as infant mortality through malaria is excessively heavy in Africa among the natives.

I have answered you in a general way, but a medical encyclopedia would give you more specific information.

Barranquilla

SOME interesting side-lights on a little known neck-o'-the-woods:

Question:—"Would you kindly give me information about Barranquilla, Colombia, South America? Health conditions, and the kind of clothing required. Will be employed on the river that the city is on. Also living conditions; in fact, any information that you think necessary. I will thank you, for I intend going there in about two weeks."—F. H. KOEHLER, St. Louis, Mo.

Answer, by Mr. Young:—Barranquilla, Colombia, is situated near the mouth of the Magdalena River. It is hot and tropical but cooled by seabreezes at most all hours of the day.

The principal buildings of the place are of adobe, covered with tile. The smaller ones are of wooden poles thatched with grass and palm-leaves.

The last time I walked the streets they were unpaved, making for dust in the Summer and mud in the Winter, or rainy season. It was very primitive when I was there, but I understand much improvement has been made during the past four years.

There is a tiny railroad connecting this place with Savanilla. The conductor takes a huge pair of scissors and cuts your ticket in two diagonally, and gives you one triangle with a bow. He usually looks for a five-cent tip from a white man and receives it with a bow and a flourish.

For exact data see Encyclopedia Britannica under this title and also under "Colombia."

Khaki for work, light-weight American clothing for dress, or also white duck and linen for dress.

If you are going to work for the river steamship company they will furnish you with quarters and possibly meals at cost.

A Transcontinental Fishing-Trip

THE varieties of fish run in streaks from east to west:

Question:—"I am expecting to make a transcontinental trip at some time this year. Can you advise me about the fishing, such as places, and what tackle a person might need? Also anything about the crossing the mountains."—CHARLES A. WARREN, Hyde Park, N. Y.

Answer, by Mr. Thompson:—While making a transcontinental trip let this rule apply: In nearly all the Middle States the fishing is for bass, pike and pickerel and some coarser fish. A few States, especially those bordering the North, have trout. All through the Rockies, trout—rainbows, native and the larger trout in the Northwest, as well as Dolly Vardens and Cutthroats. The same on the Coast in the mountains, except you will find many places stocked with bass. So take fly-rod and casting-rod, trout and bass flies, and casting-lures.

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LOST TRAILS

NOTE—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, *give your own name if possible.* All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication in their "Missing Relative Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

DE YATTOS, HARRY BURTON. Last known working as a teller in the Dominion Bank, King and Jarvis Streets, Toronto, Ont., Canada. Supposed to have gone overseas with 48th Highlanders. Fair complexion, fair hair, blue eyes, five feet six inches tall. Have something of importance to tell you. Any one knowing his whereabouts please write.—BILLIE JARVIS, Box 734, G. P. O. Toronto, Ont., Canada.

BRADY, FRANK J. Machinists mate (A) U. S. N. Have lost "Wardy's" trail. Please write.—"HARDY," 457 East 115th St., Cleveland, Ohio.

ADAM, HARRY C. Last heard of in Wyoming three years ago. Any information will be appreciated.—Address Sister, MRS. A. E. SWENSON, 412 North 59th St., Seattle, Washington.

ANY ONE who was in the Militia Division Q. M. C. Base Hospital, Camp Jackson, S. C., who can give affidavit as to the condition of my health while in hospital, from February 22nd to March 16th 1919, to help satisfy compensation claim. Any information will be appreciated. —Address ROMAN P. BERCHER, care of U. S. P. H. S. Hospital 25, Houston, Texas.

TODD, R. HUBERT. Age twenty-nine, fair, five feet eight inches tall, lame. Last seen at Shepparton, Australia, Oct. 1912. Supposed to be in Canada suffering from loss of memory. May be farming and known as Dodds. Any information will be appreciated.—Address B. CANTHORNE, P. O. Redcliff, Alberta, Canada.

FAWKES, HARRY K. 1st Lieut. O. C. Stationed in Bridgeport, Conn. Last heard of in November 1918 in Bridgeport. Height about five feet 10 inches, weight 160 pounds, light-brown hair, blue eyes. Traveled extensively, Europe, S. America, Mexico, China, Japan. Any information will be appreciated by his brother.—Address J. K. P. care of *Adventure*.

BURNS, WILLIAM (SLIPPERY) of Dubuque, Iowa. Age about thirty-one. Was at Eldora in 1904-06. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated. —Address H. R. B. Box 277, Valley Jct., Iowa.

KISTER, NORVAL L. Known as "Hatchet" in the Army. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated.—Address VICTOR L. LUECHE, Gen. Del., Los Angeles, Cal.

LEWIS, WILLIAM J. Went to the Shakers to live in 1862, either in Alfred, Maine, or Gloucester, Maine. Any information as to his whereabouts will be appreciated. —Address MRS. S. M. BRADBURY, Room 10, Gurnsey Blk., Keene, N. H.

THE following have been inquired for in either the February 20th or February 28th issues of Adventure. They can get the names of the inquirers from this magazine:

ANSELL, EDWARD CLARENCE TRELAWNEY; Beck, Lewis, M.; Brown, Eddie Alford; Brown, Miss Josephine; Browning, Robert F.; Clarke, Gilbert Van Antwerpt; Dayve, Edward C.; Gleason, John J.; Harriman, Robert Clayton; Herbert, N. A.; Jacques, Frank L.; Jones, Oscar; Kepner, Mrs. Edith; King, Phillips; Laird, Lawrence Russell; Leider, Dolores; Mannion, Michael Patrick; McCabe, Joe R.; McNally, Patrick and Joe; Molewitz, William; Reynolds, Miss Kattie Agnes; Riffle, C. H.; Swann, Charlie; Washburn, Hugh E.; Williams, Harry H.

MISCELLANEOUS: Co. 1 3rd Batt. Engineers; Ex-soldiers who served under Sgt. Edwin Swain, 354th Bakery Co. St. Aignan A. E. F. France; Lonergan, Sgt. Patrick; Meehan, Jack or any boys of Co. C. 29th Infantry, Men who served under Casomi in Central America and Lower Mexico, and boys who were with me in Cape Town, South Africa; F. W. D.; Parents of George Caldwell.

THE TRAIL AHEAD

THE MARCH 20TH ISSUE

Besides the complete novel mentioned on the second contents page of this issue the next *Adventure* will bring you the following stories:

THE LAND OF OPHIR A Three-Part Story Part II — ***Charles Beadle***
Into the unknown deserts of Sudan.

THE BURIAL OF BILLY — ***Captain Dingle***
Requiem of an unregenerate adventurer.

THE DROUGHT — ***Barry Scobee***
Walking in the dust with death.

THE GOAT-MAN — ***Robert Simpson***
He tried that trick once too often.

THE DUDE — ***Frank H. Shaw***
A first-rate sailor in spite of fancy clothes.

THE CLEAR FLAME OF COURAGE — ***Paul L. Anderson***
A supreme test of manhood.

"A BIT OF A SPHIT" — ***E. O. Foster***
Major Morphy tames an inspector-general.

YELLER JACK — ***Rolf Bennett***
A dog qualifies as a seaman.

THE UNKNOWN QUANTITY — ***Stanton C. Lapham***
A legal claim-jumper in Alaska.

THE JUMP-BACK — ***Thomson Burtis***
A sure cure for cowardice.

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Eastman Kodak Company Rochester, N. Y. *The Kodak City*

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COLGATE'S

"HANDY GRIP"
REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

The Refill Shaving Stick

Like Renewing a Battery in a Flashlight

PUTTING a "Refill" into Colgate's "Handy Grip" is easy and simple. The soap itself is threaded to screw into the socket.

Moisten the bit removed from the "Handy Grip" and stick it upon the end of the "Refill." There is no waste.

Colgate's lathers freely, and needs no mussy rubbing in with the fingers. It leaves the face cool and refreshed.

Colgate's Shaving Stick not only produces the most soothing lather for the average man but it is a little more economical in use than powder and much more economical than cream. As we make all three, we can give you this impartial advice.

The metal "Handy Grip" containing a trial size stick of Colgate's Shaving Soap, sent for 10c. When the trial stick is used up you can buy the Colgate "Refills," threaded to fit this Grip. Thus you save 10c. on each "Refill" you buy. There are 350 shaves in a Colgate Shaving Stick—double the number you can get from a tube of cream at the same price.

COLGATE & CO.
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199 Fulton Street, New York

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